Composers on the Decks

by

Alex H. Kotch

Department of Music
Duke University

Date:_____

Approved:

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Stephen Jaffe, Supervisor

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Scott Lindroth

_____
John Supko

_____
Mark Katz

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Department of
Music in the Graduate School
of Duke University

2013

ABSTRACT

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Abstract

Composers on the Decks is comprised of three related parts: an original composition for amplified chamber ensemble and laptop DJ, *Alleys Of Your Mind*; an extended article entitled "Composers on the Decks: Hybridity of Place and Practice among Composer-DJs Gabriel Prokofiev, Mason Bates, Ari Benjamin Meyers and Brandt Brauer Frick"; and an archive of edited interviews of the four primary research subjects. Chapter 1 is the author's artistic contribution. Chapters 2 and 3 explore the emerging practices of "club classical" and what I am calling "instrumental-electronic dance music" in what may be the first academic study to examine the latter and its connections with the former.

Alleys of Your Mind is a work for seven wind instruments, soprano and laptop DJ composed as social dance music, intended to be performed in a nightclub. Its repetitive style, electronic dance beats and long-form instrumental writing create a musical hybrid of classical compositional techniques and electronic dance music (EDM). The work contains three movements: the first and longest movement is paced at a dance tempo of 124 beats-per-minute; the second movement at half of that speed, 62 beats-per-minute; and Movement 3 returns to the original tempo. The movements are performed without pause and leave generous space for the DJ to improvise with audio effects and an extended interlude in Movement 2. In addition, *Alleys Of Your Mind* has a documentary dimension: audio samples of medical machinery and voices, recorded by the composer during his recovery in a neuroscience intensive care unit, feature in the second and third movements.

Chapter 2 introduces the related practices of "club classical" and "instrumental-

EDM," explaining the musical connections between contemporary classical and EDM and interpreting the hybrid social environments where this music lives. The first section deals with the club classical phenomenon in the practices of composer-DJs Gabriel Prokofiev and Mason Bates, and presenters such as Yellow Lounge. Prokofiev leads Nonclassical Records and hosts monthly club nights in London, during which live sets of recent classical works alternate with sets from Nonclassical's resident DJs. The label's releases adapt classical music to an EDM format, featuring new classical compositions and electronic remixes of these works. Bates presents Mercury Soul, a party in nightclubs that links DJ sets of EDM with live classical sets via composed, electro-acoustic interludes; these nights involve a director, conductor, and a chamber ensemble from a major symphony. Yellow Lounge situates older classical music in nightclubs and employs DJs who spin classical works between live sets. Ari Benjamin Meyers composes instrumental-EDM, music that features classically influenced composition with a dance focus, and has performed it with his Redux Orchestra in Berlin's late night dance clubs from 2005-2012. Brandt Brauer Frick, an EDM trio, formed an 11-piece ensemble of mostly classical instruments that plays their orchestrated techno-like tracks in clubs and concert halls.

Using social and performance analysis, the chapter describes these phenomena as musical and social hybridity. Club classical and instrumental-EDM evince a desire on the part of event planners and classically trained composers to connect on a more physical and social level with their audience. Many of the composers and presenters express a wish that through these practices, classical music can expand beyond the concert hall and potentially see a demographic change in its audience over time. The chapter also delves

into the narrow demographics of the classical-EDM scene, the difficulties of instrumental-EDM, and situates the author's dissertation composition, *Alleys Of Your Mind*, and its presentation at the Duke Coffeehouse, within the greater practice of instrumental-EDM.

Chapter 3 presents edited versions of the author's interviews with the study's four primary research subjects. This documentation, and the dissertation as a whole, is paired with a website, composersonthedecks.org, which provides additional information, photographs, links, and audio and video of *Alleys Of Your Mind*.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Anne and Jonathan. From before I can remember, they have encouraged me to follow my passions and instincts, while at the same time, wisely guiding me towards pursuits they knew I would thrive in, such as swimming and music. Always engaged in what I do and encouraging my every move, my mother and father have provided me with a strong and constant force that I cherish immensely.

After a ruptured brain aneurysm, my parents spent two full weeks with me in the Neuroscience ICU of Duke Hospital and devoted the following month to helping me gain back my health as I lived with them in downtown Durham. I was, and am, so lucky to have such loving parents, and my nieces and nephews are equally fortunate to have them as devoted grandparents.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Acknowledgments

I give great thanks to my advisor, Stephen Jaffe, for his dedication as a composition professor and dissertation mentor. Steve has spent numerous semesters helping me with my compositional craft, challenging me both musically and academically, and supporting my ideas and my work throughout my six and a half years at Duke. Steve planted the idea of a "dissertation dance party" and was instrumental in making this happen. I am very grateful, Steve, for the enormous amount of time and effort you put into each of your students; I have been consistently amazed at your dedication to your job and your sense of responsibility towards your students and colleagues.

I would like to thank the other members of my committee, Prof. Scott Lindroth, Prof. John Supko, and Prof. Mark Katz of UNC-Chapel Hill, for their help with this project. Prof. Lindroth, Prof. Anthony Kelley, and Prof. Allen Anderson of UNC-Chapel Hill have also given me private composition lessons, which I greatly appreciate.

Throughout my time as a graduate student, the staff in the Department of Music has been essential to making everything happen. I deeply thank Christy Reuss, Heidi Hallstead, Gretchen Hoag, Cecilia Goldman, Percy Kelly, Rick Nelson, and Elizabeth Thompson for their hard work in facilitating many of my needs and concert requirements as well as those of everyone else in the Department. I am grateful to Dan Ruccia for making a great poster for the show and offering helpful advice on dissertation process.

To Duke Music Librarian Laura Williams I owe a big thank you for her endless willingness to allocate library resources and her help with citation formatting and other questions I have had along the way.

Thanks to Prof. Douglas Campbell, who, as head of Duke's Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD) committee, helped me enormously with my essay and application for the DAAD Research Grant. I owe Prof. Philip Rupprecht thanks for writing me essential recommendations. And many thanks to the DAAD and Duke University for their financial support of my academic work.

My interviewees gave valuable insights into a practice of which they are part, and for this I am very grateful to Kerry Andrew, Mason Bates, Zoé Cartier, Sarah Dacey, Jennifer Dautermann, Paul Frick, Max Loderbauer, Richard Lannoy, Sam Mackay, Ari Benjamin Meyers, Felix Mesenburg, Gabriel Prokofiev, and Benjamin Shwartz.

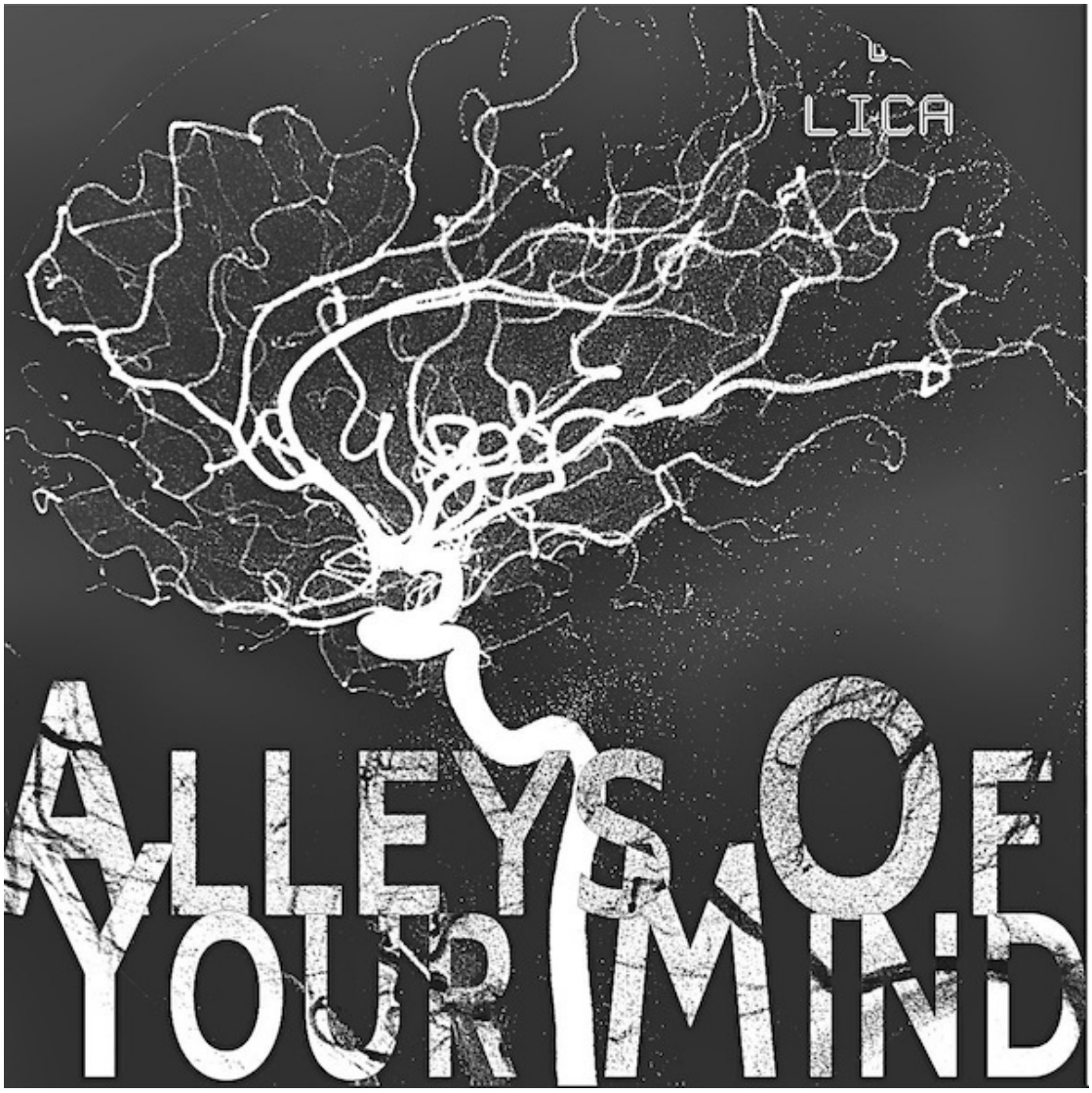
The scholars Luis Manuel-Garcia, Prof. Peter Wicke, and Prof. Jens Papenburg met with me at critical points in my research and allowed me to advance in my thinking.

For their dedicated rehearsal and performance, I thank the North Carolina-based musicians whom I worked with on *Alleys Of Your Mind*: Susan Fancher, saxophone; Rachael Elliott, bassoon; Verena Moesenbichler-Bryan, conductor; Don Eagle, trumpet; Mike Kris, bass trombone; and Jamie Keesecker, horn – special thanks to Verena and Jamie for donating their skills to this performance. Thank you to the members of the Wet Ink Ensemble who rehearsed and performed this work as well: Kate Soper, voice; Erin Lesser, flutes; Alex Mincek, tenor saxophone; and Sam Pluta, sound engineer. I am thankful to Jason Richmond and Sound Pure Studios for recording and mixing the concert. And I am very grateful to Susan Fancher and Rachael Elliott, with whom I have frequently worked on original music written for them; through these collaborations, they have helped me immensely in developing my compositional skills, and they have consistently supported my creative work.

I am ever grateful to nurse Brooke Williams (formerly Anderson) not only for taking excellent care of me in the Duke University Neuroscience Intensive Care Unit, but for going out of her way to facilitate my recordings of hospital equipment, and her voice, while I recovered. After composing my dissertation piece, I tried to contact her, with no success, but I hope one day she will discover that her recorded voice found a prominent refrain in a doctoral dissertation composition. I also appreciate my brother, Seth, and Ken Stewart for bringing essential recording equipment to me in the ICU. Seth also brought essential, homemade egg and cheese biscuits.

Thanks also to my fellow graduate students, with whom I have made lots of music, held academic discussions, and shared food, drink, and friendship.

Chapter 1: *Alleys Of Your Mind*



Alleys Of Your Mind (2012)
Alex H. Kotch
Duration: approximately 28:30

Instrumentation

Soprano
Flute/piccolo
Bb Clarinet
Alto Saxophone/Tenor Saxophone
Bassoon
French Horn
Trumpet
Bass Trombone
Laptop DJ

Performance Instructions

All instruments should be amplified, with a sound engineer adjusting levels as needed during performance. A conductor is recommended. If using a conductor, he/she should use a click track. Without a conductor, all performers except the Laptop DJ should use click tracks.

The piece is fundamentally a work of electronic dance music and is designed to be performed at a dance or rock club. Reverberant spaces will not work sonically, and formal spaces are not recommended due to the dance and popular nature of the music. Because of the prominent bass and percussion in the electronics, a dance club-worthy sound system is necessary for the desired effect.

The electronic component is notated in detail in four staves: two staves of synthesizer-based sound (“Synth”), vocal samples (“Vox”), and percussion (“Electr.”). The electronic percussion notation follows standard drum set notation.

Composer's Note

Alleys Of Your Mind combines styles from electronic dance music genres such as techno, bass, and dubstep with classical instrumentation. Movements 2 and 3 include recordings I made in the Neuroscience Intensive Care Unit at Duke Hospital while recovering from brain surgery in October 2010. The composition represents not only my interest in the musical opportunities and social benefits of combining the worlds of club and classical music, but also my difficult yet transformative recovery from brain trauma.

Alleys Of Your Mind shares its title as one of the first ever techno tracks, written by Cybotron (Juan Atkins and Richard Davis) in 1981. This title is quite apt for my composition and its themes, but it is also a tribute to Atkins and to Detroit techno, a major indirect influence on my work.

Performance History

Alleys Of Your Mind was first performed at the Duke Coffeehouse on April 6, 2012 under the direction of Verena-Mösenbichler-Bryant, with Alex Kotch, DJ. The core of the group consisted of the Wet Ink Ensemble, in residence during 2011-2012 under the auspices of a Visiting Artists Grant to the Department of Music through the Duke University Council for the Arts. The concert was sponsored by the Duke University Department of Music.

A solo DJ set from Alex Kotch directly preceded *Alleys Of Your Mind* and segued into a transition in which the live instruments entered, beginning Movement 1. A video archive is available at http://youtu.be/4A0Cmlg54Dw. Subsequent performances for reduced instrumental forces have been produced.

CONCERT PITCH SCORE

Alleys Of Your Mind

Movement 1

Alex Kotch
(2012)

1 **A** **Steady, somber** ♩ = 82

Soprano

Flute

Clarinet in B♭

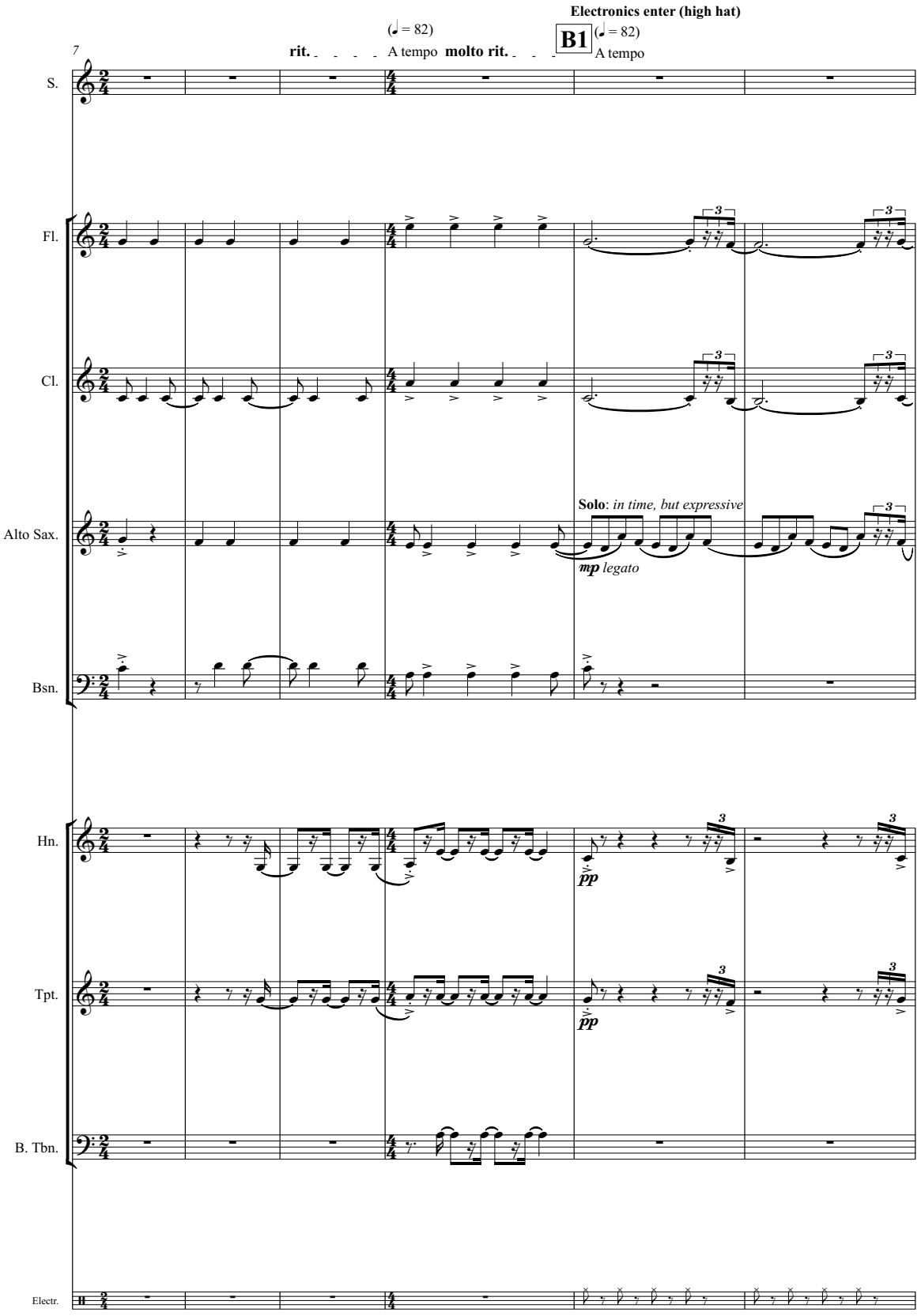
Alto Saxophone

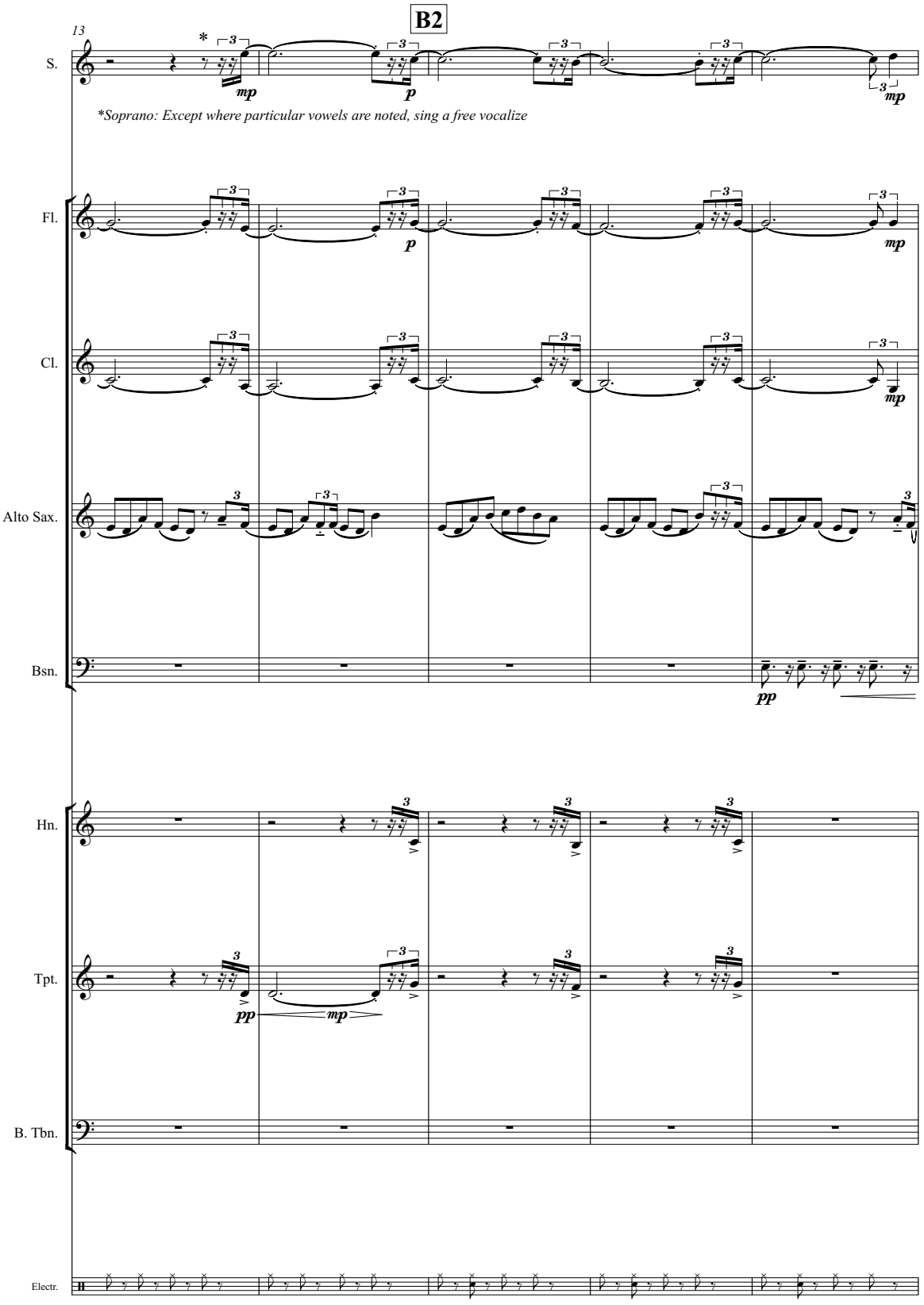
Bassoon

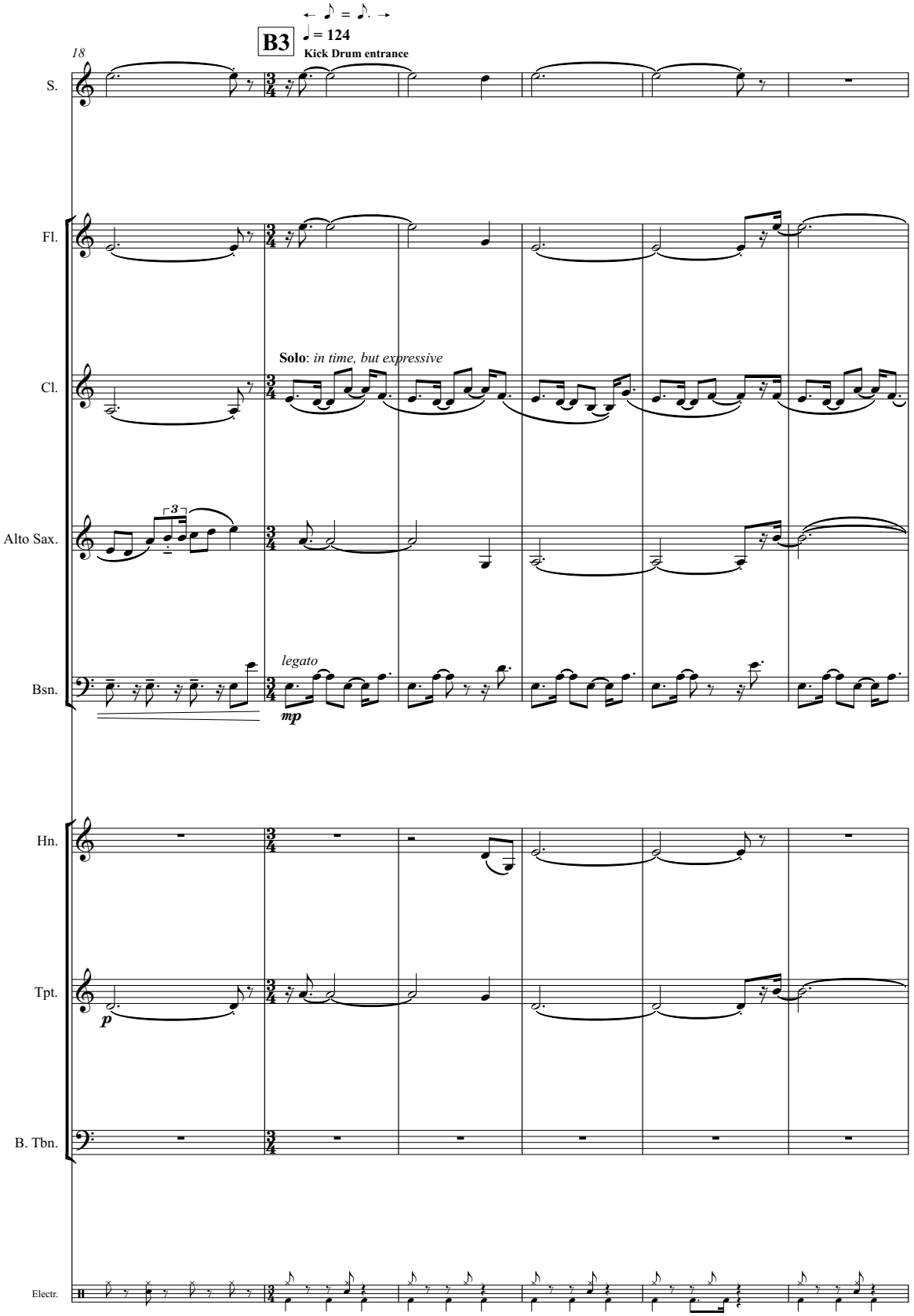
Horn in F

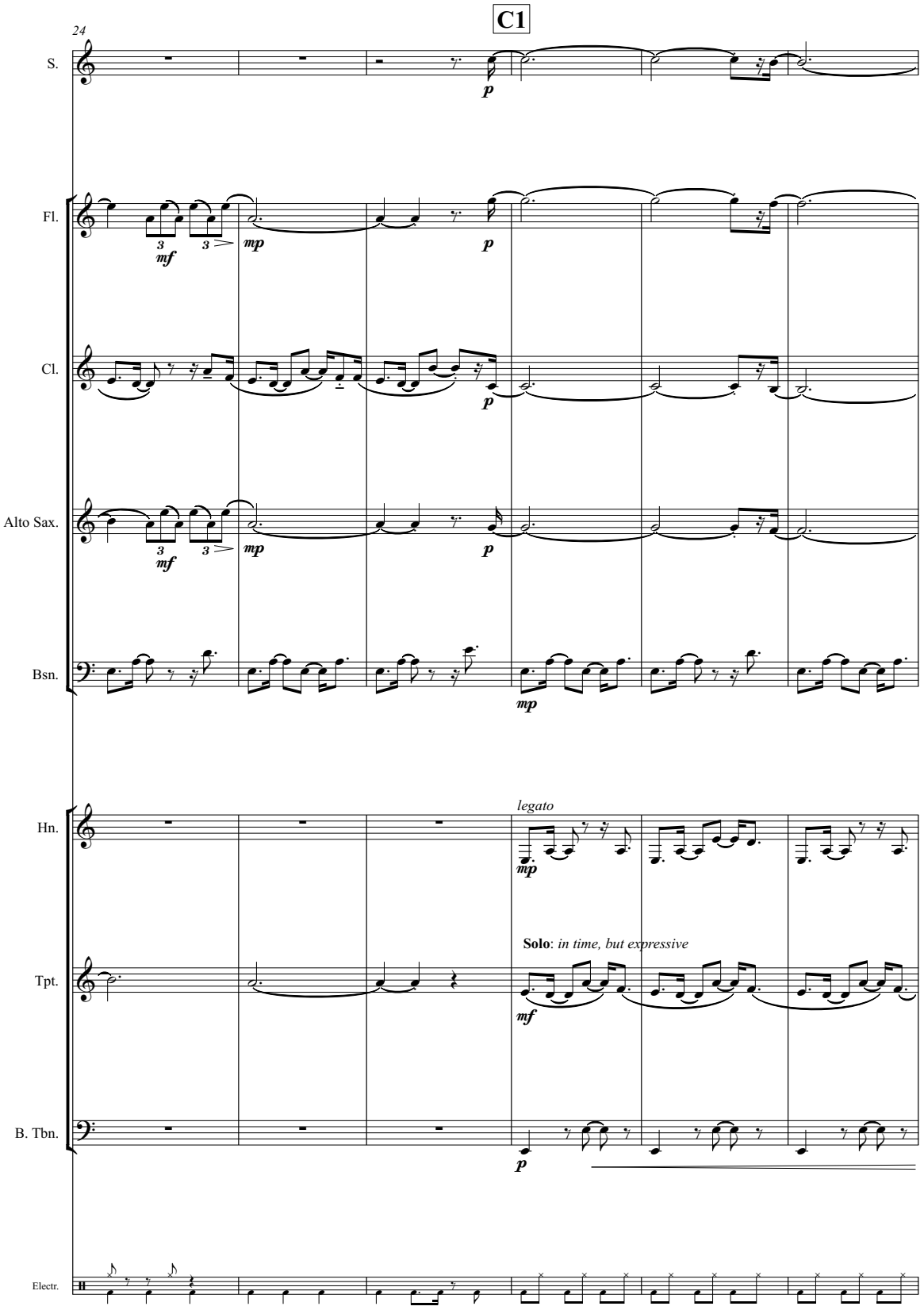
Trumpet in B♭

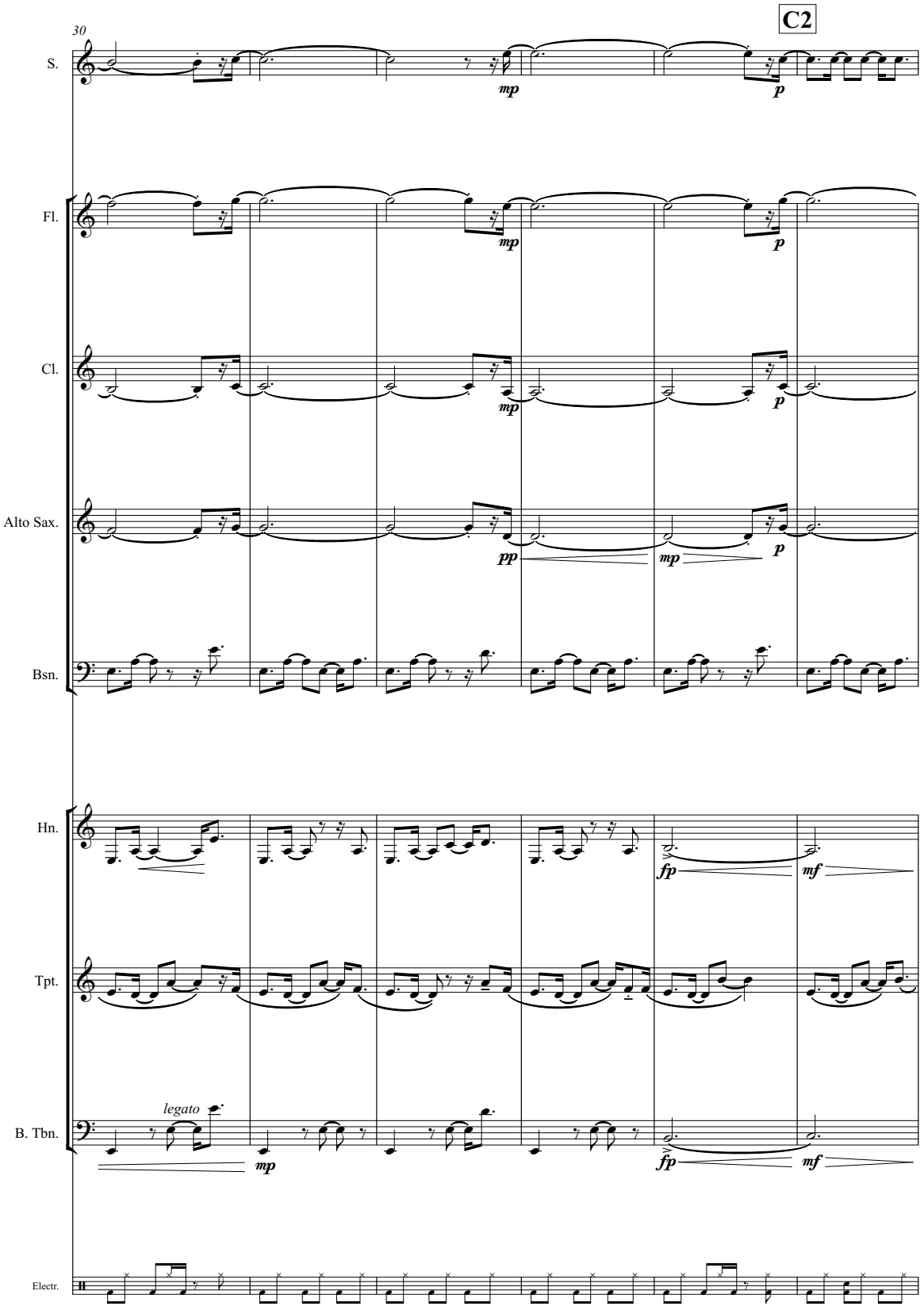
Bass Trombone

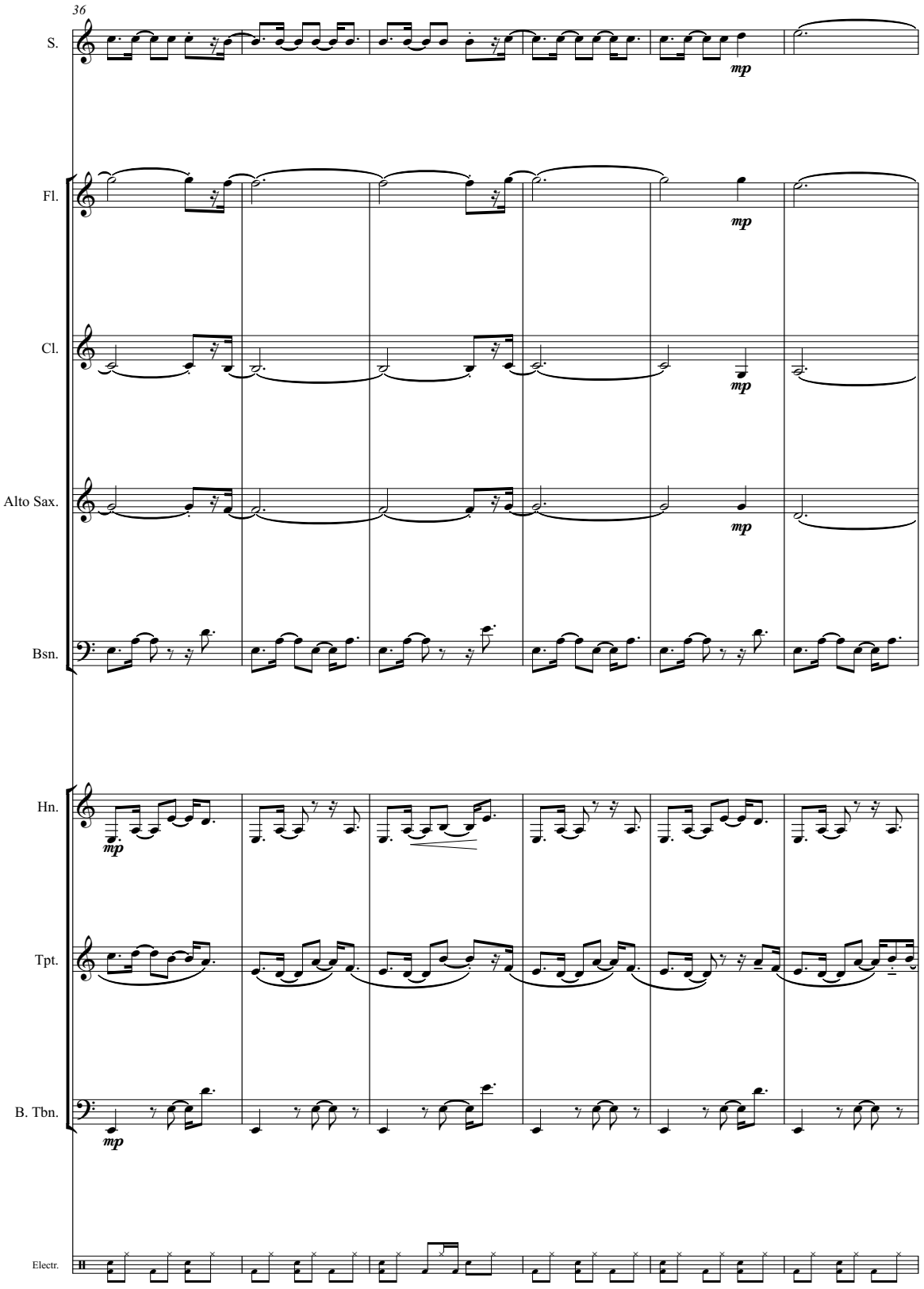

7
rit.
(♩ = 82)
A tempo
molto rit.
Electronics enter (high hat)
B1
(♩ = 82)
A tempo
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Solo: in time, but expressive
mp legato
Bsn.
Hn.
pp
Tpt.
pp
B. Tbn.
Electr.

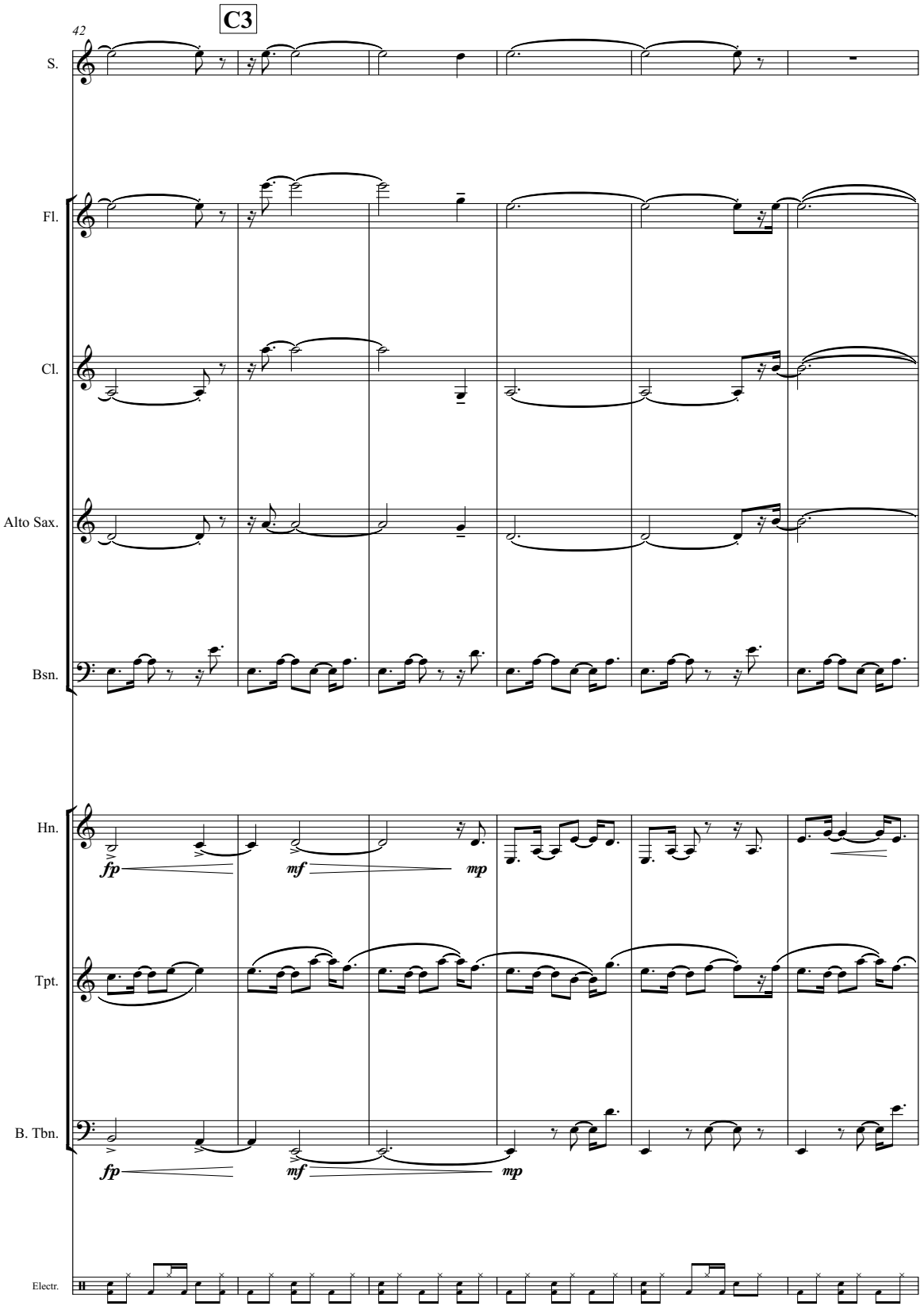

B2
13
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Electr.
*Soprano: Except where particular vowels are noted, sing a free vocalize

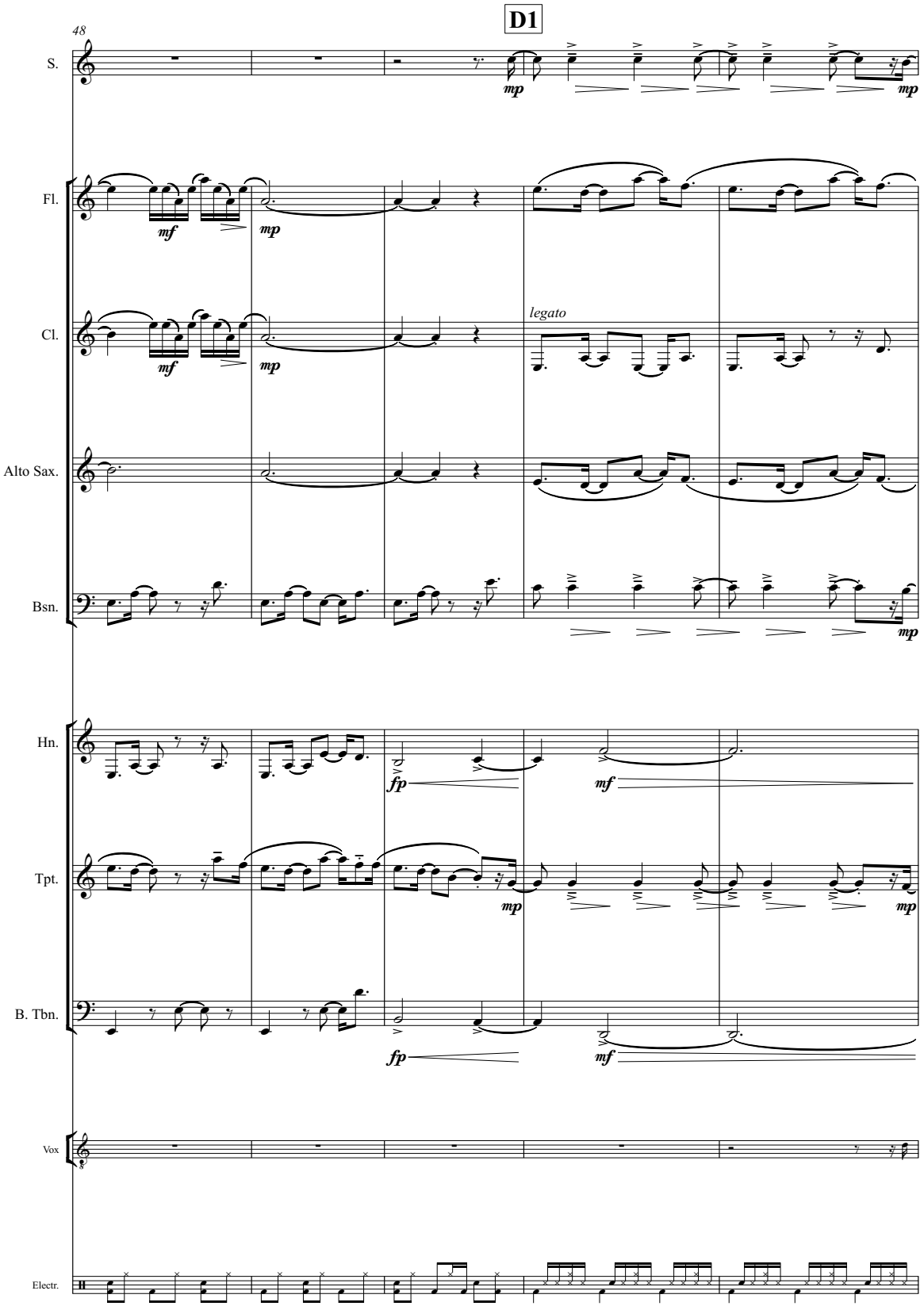

B3
♩ = 124
Kick Drum entrance
18
S.
Fl.
Solo: in time, but expressive
Cl.
Alto Sax.
3
legato
mp
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
p
B. Tbn.
Electr.

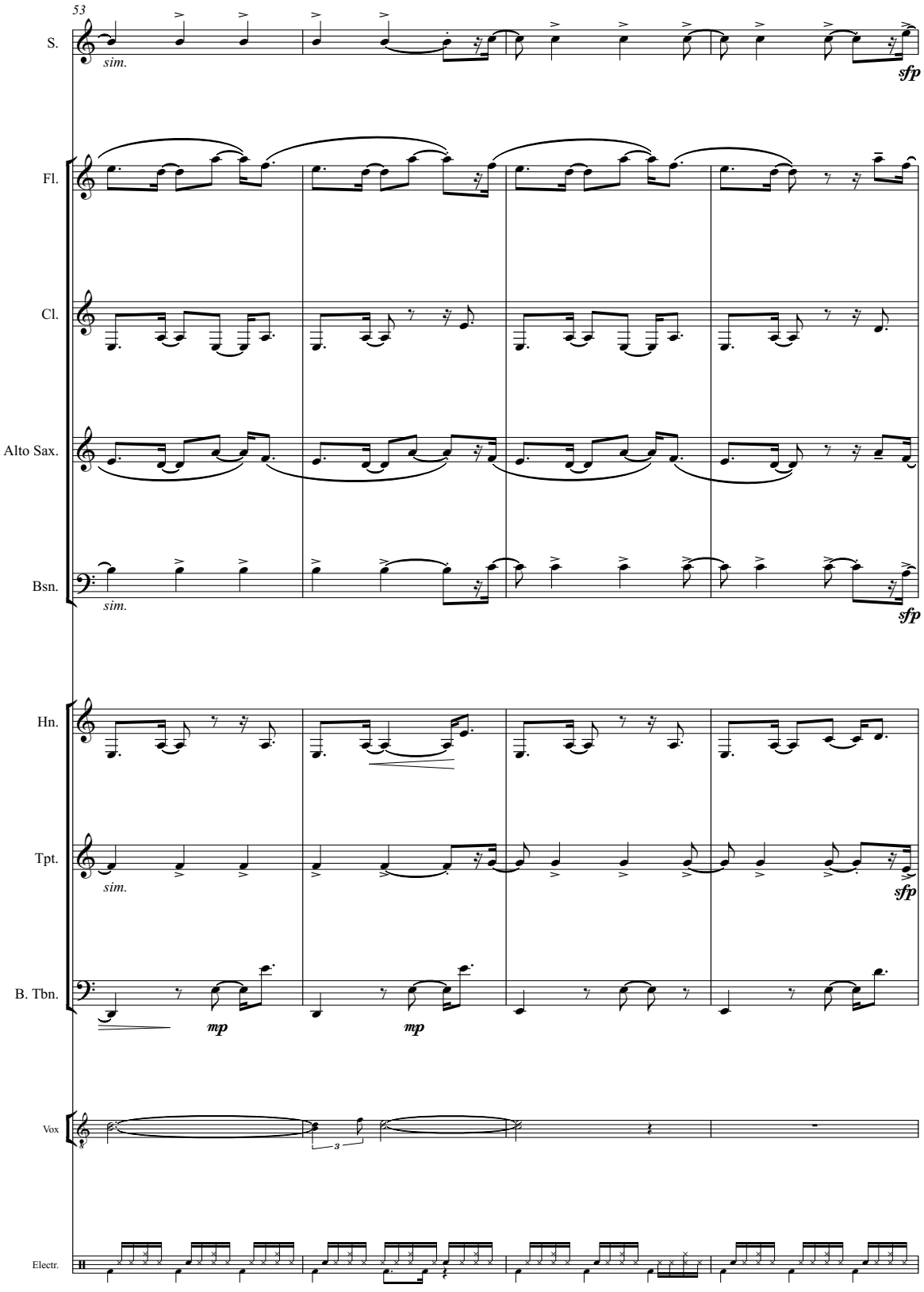

C1
24
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Electr.
legato
Solo: in time, but expressive

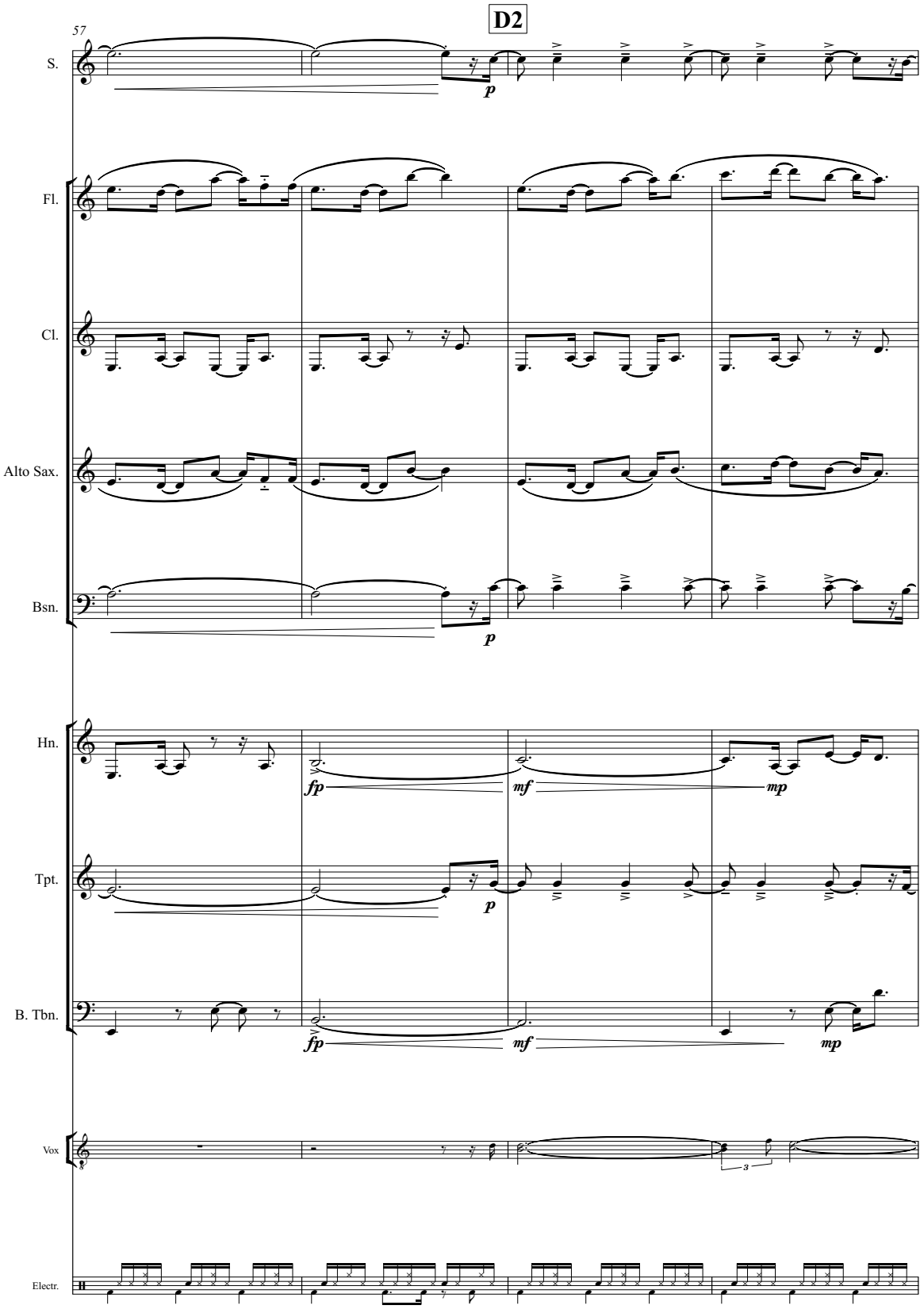

C2
30
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Electr.
legato
mp
p
pp
mf
fp

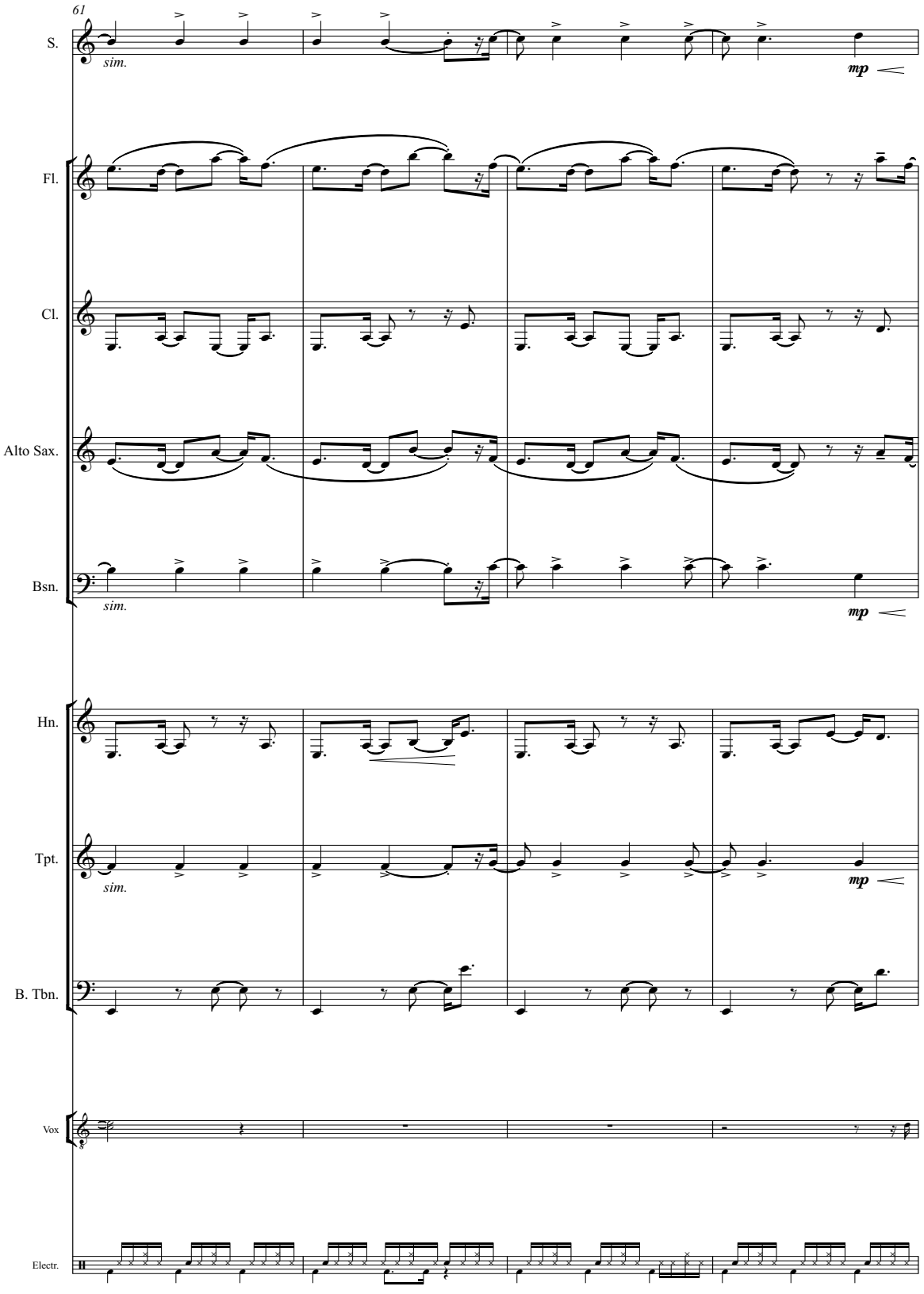

36
S.
mp
Fl.
mp
Cl.
mp
Alto Sax.
mp
Bsn.
Hn.
mp
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
mp
Electr.

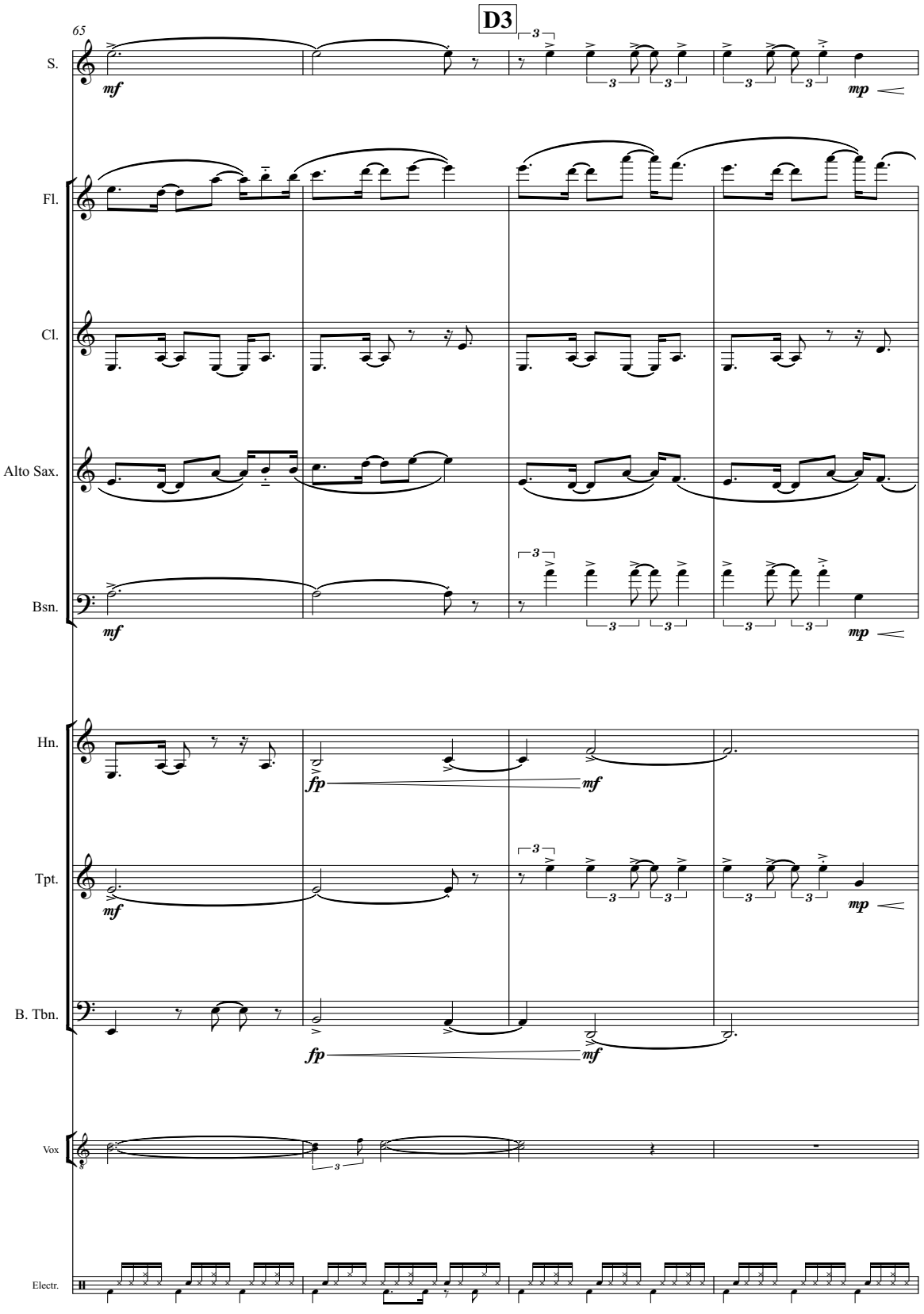

C3
42
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Electr.
fp
mf
mp
fp
mf
mp

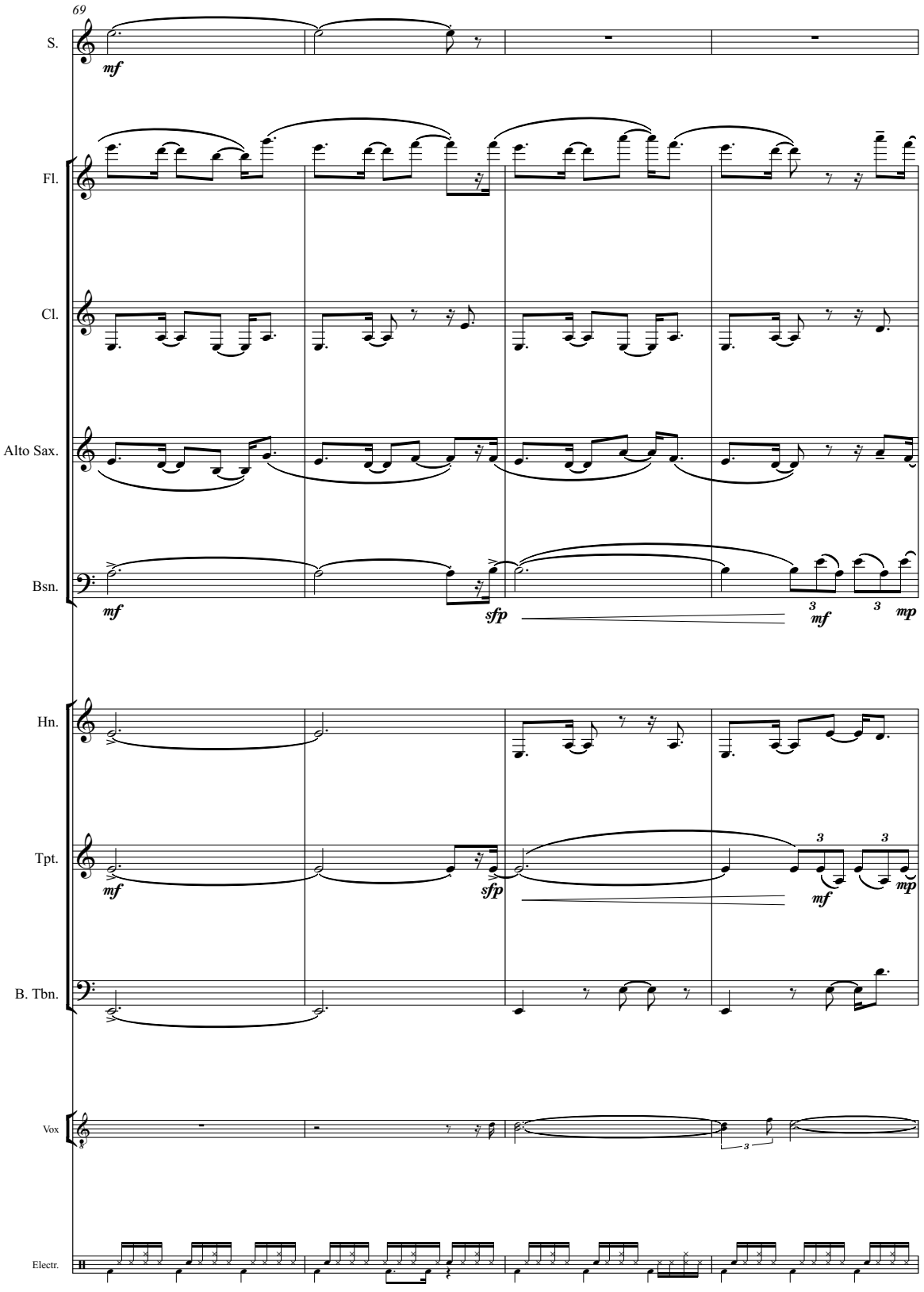

D1
48
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.
mp
mf
fp
legato

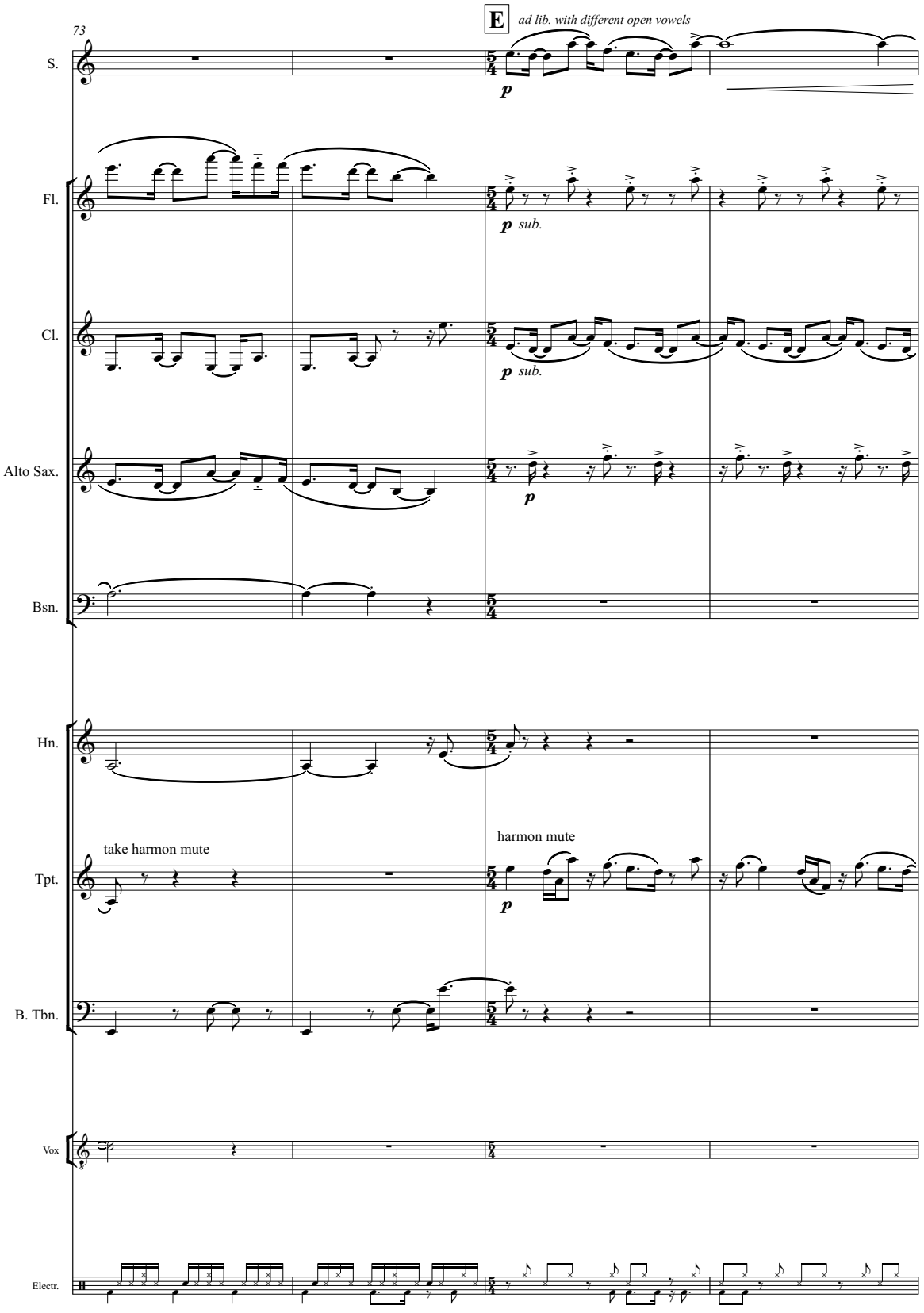

53
S.
sim.
sfp
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
sim.
sfp
Hn.
Tpt.
sim.
sfp
B. Tbn.
mp
mp
Vox
3
Electr.

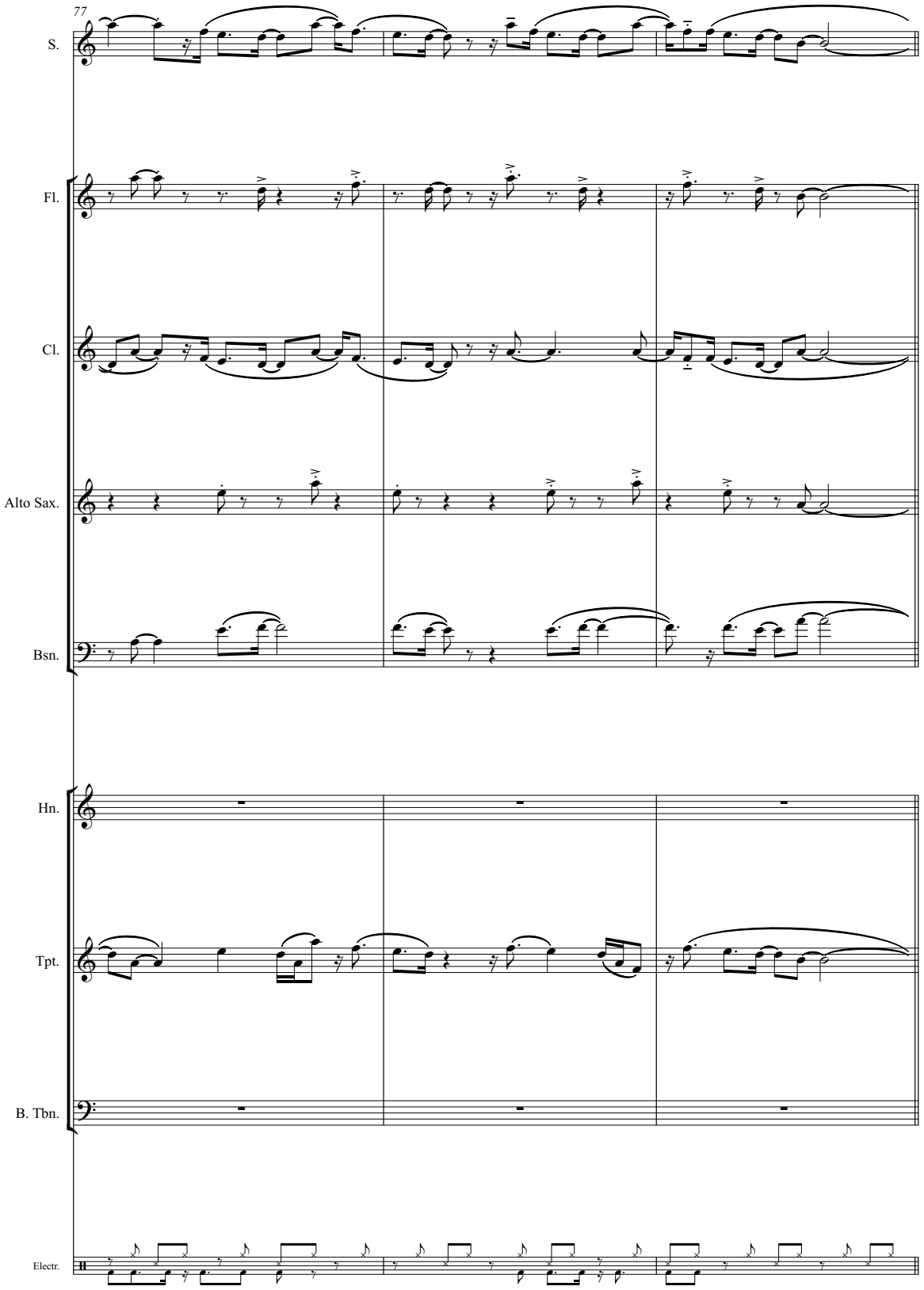

D2
57
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.
p
fp
mf
mp
3

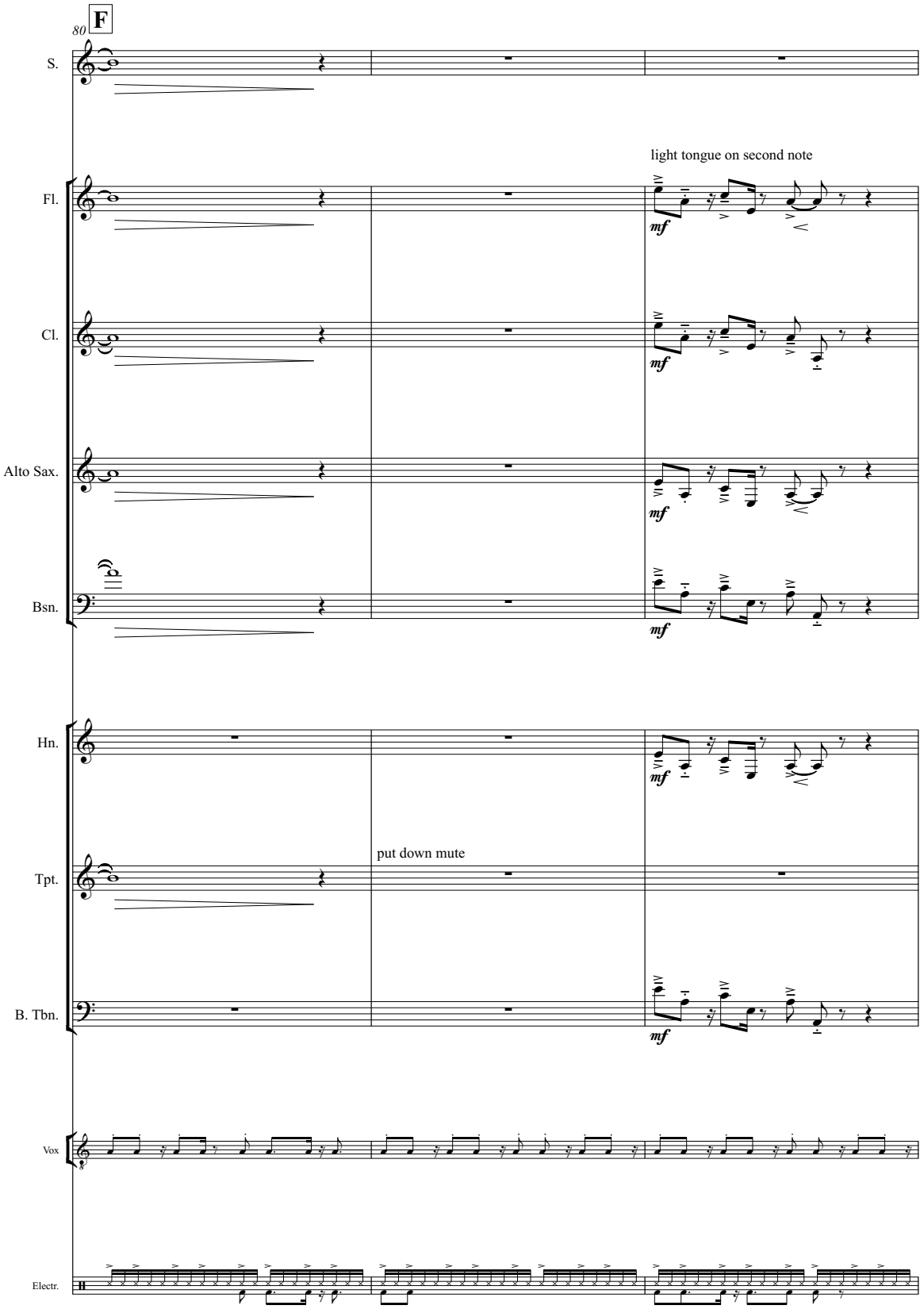

61
S.
sim.
mp
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
sim.
mp
Hn.
Tpt.
sim.
mp
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.

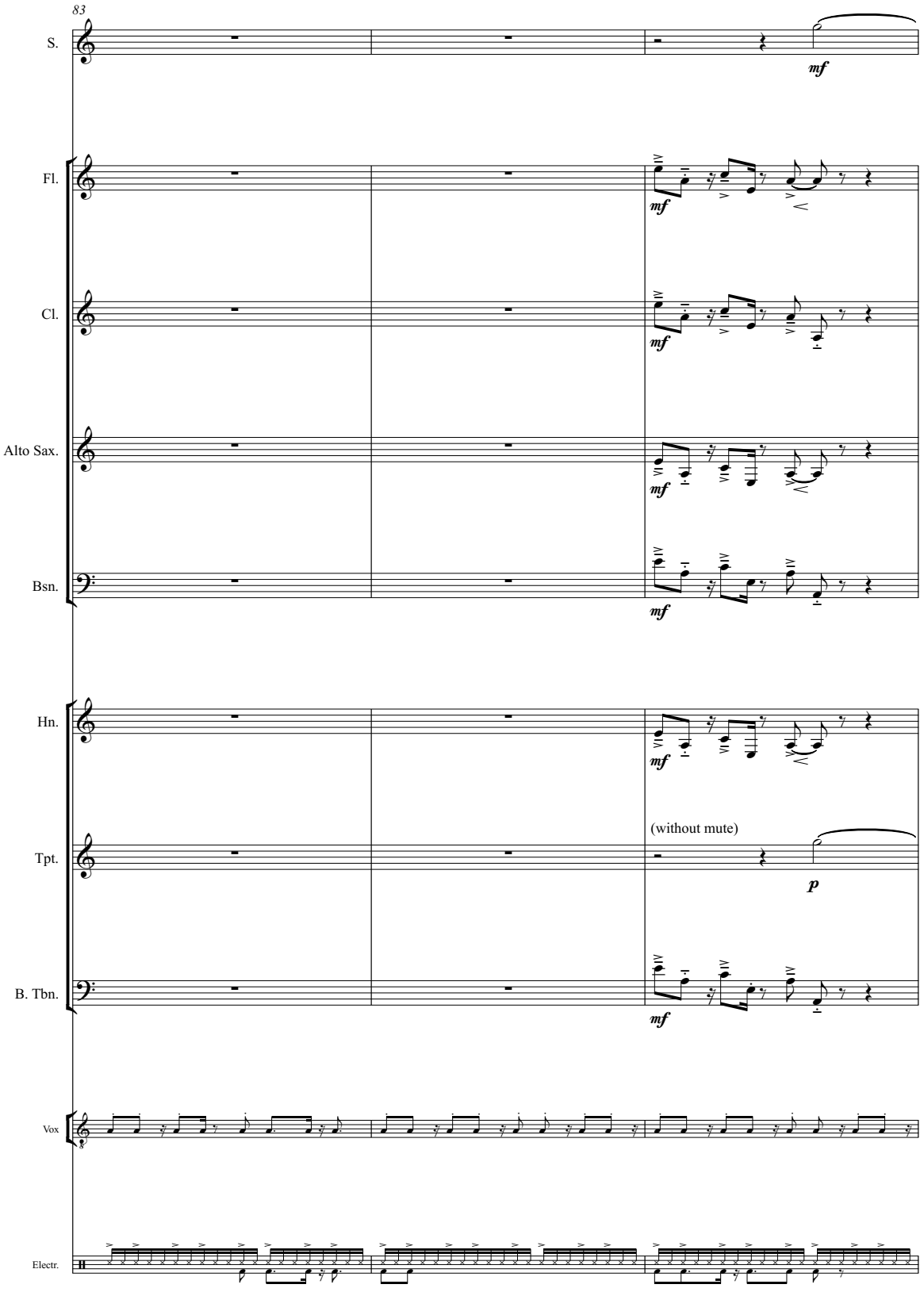

D3
65
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.
mf
mp
fp

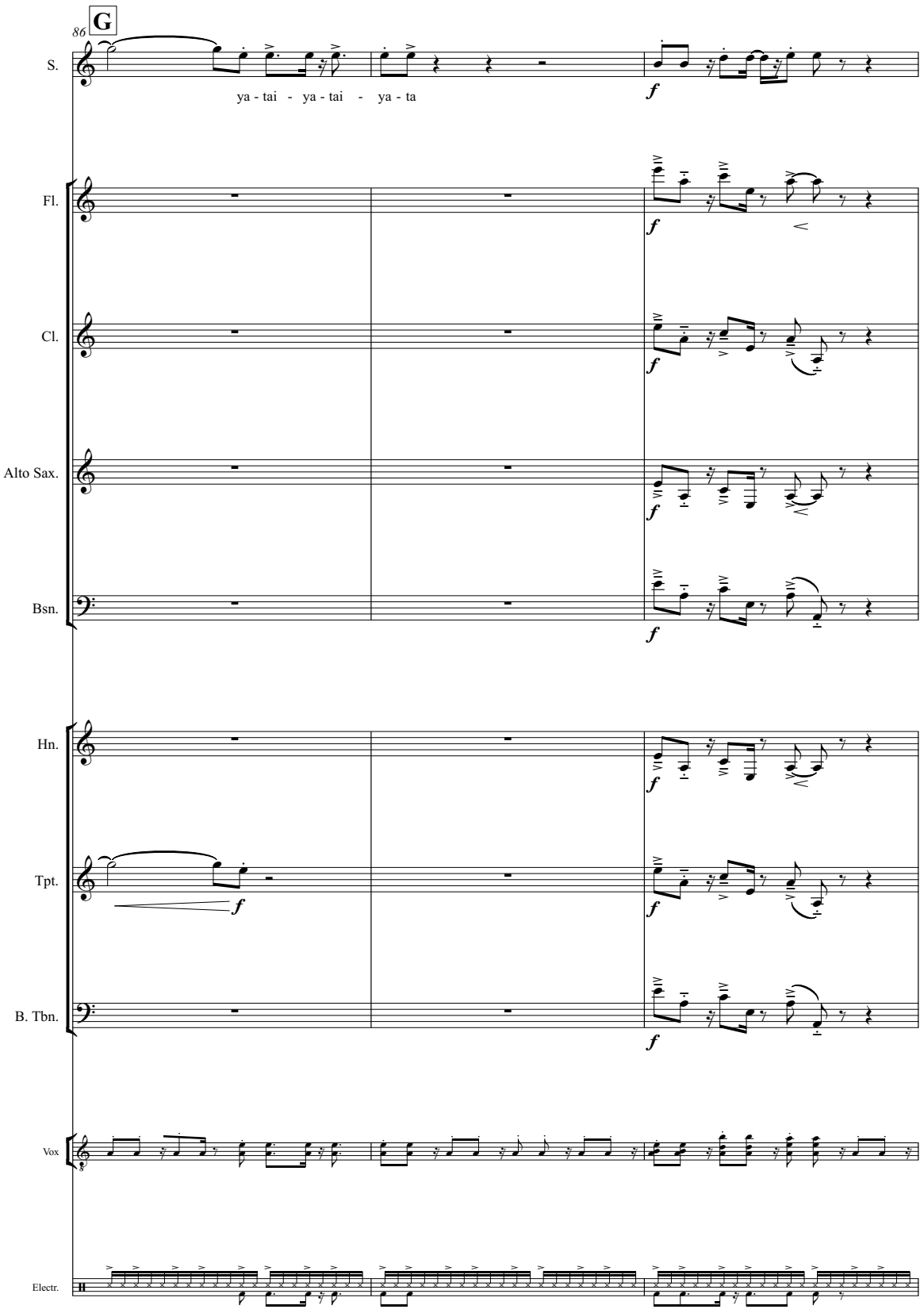

69
S.
mf
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
mf
sfp
3
mf
3
mp
Hn.
Tpt.
mf
sfp
3
mf
3
mp
B. Tbn.
Vox
3
Electr.

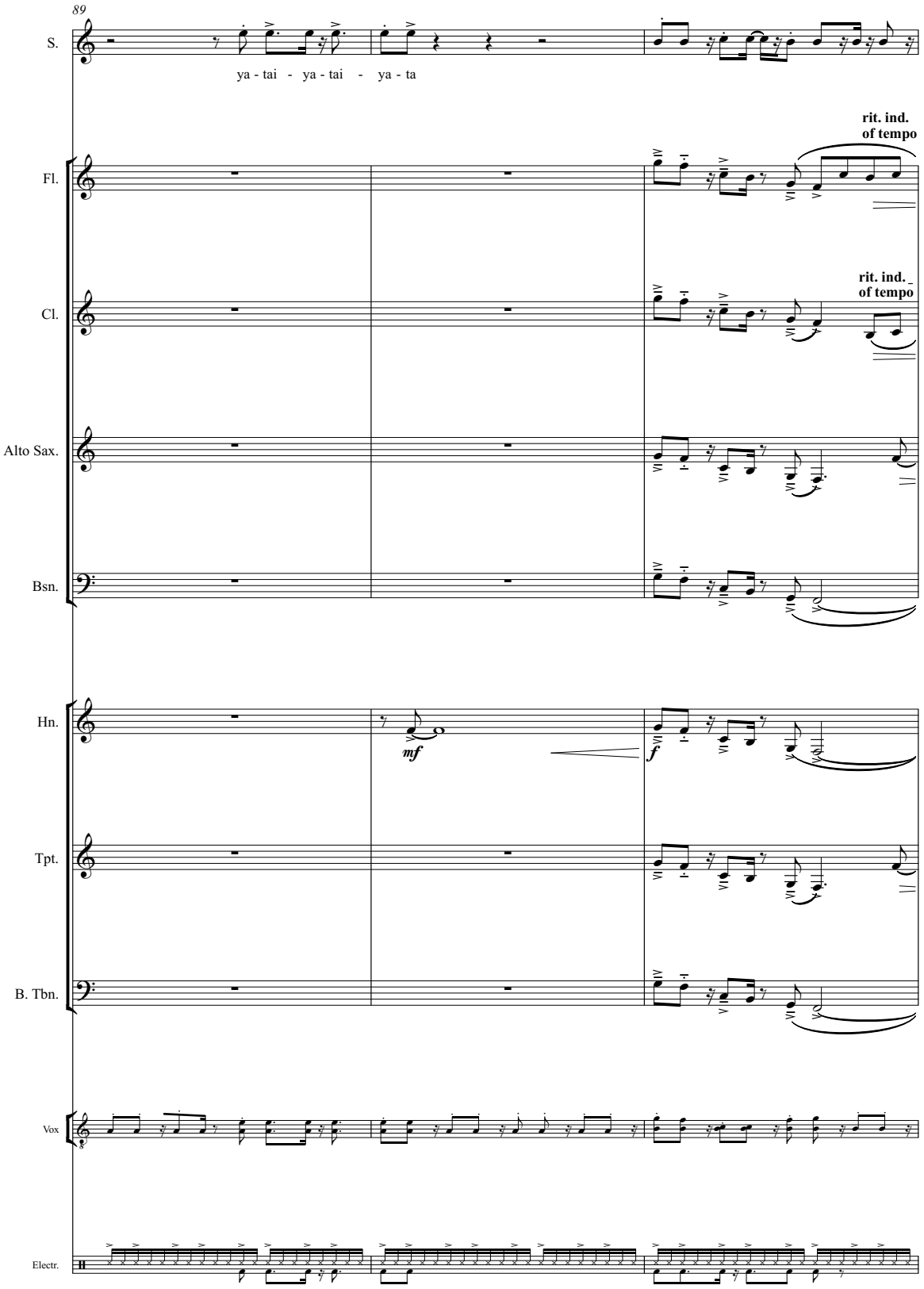

73
E
ad lib. with different open vowels
S.
p
Fl.
p sub.
Cl.
p sub.
Alto Sax.
p
Bsn.
Hn.
take harmon mute
harmon mute
Tpt.
p
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.

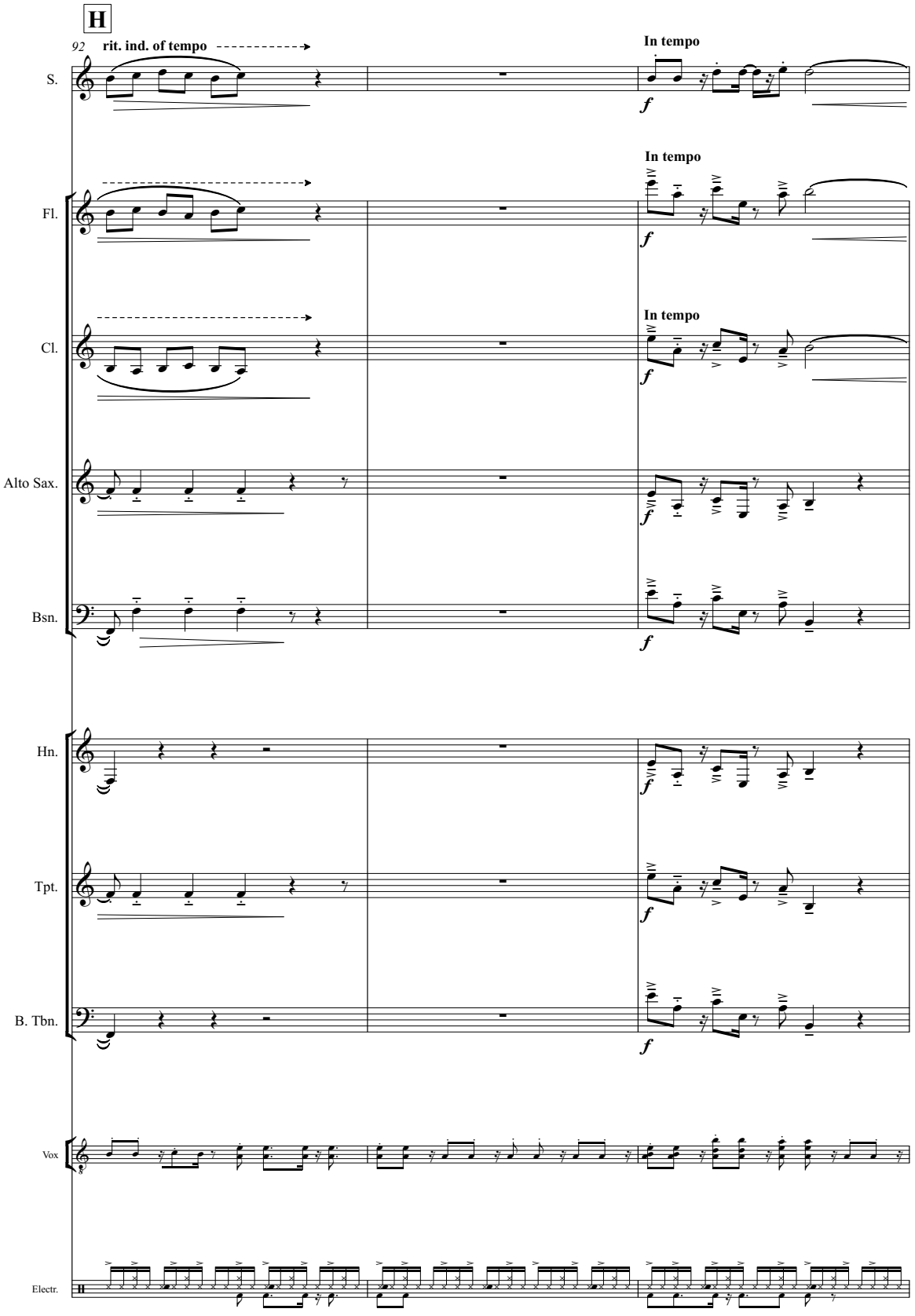

77
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Electr.

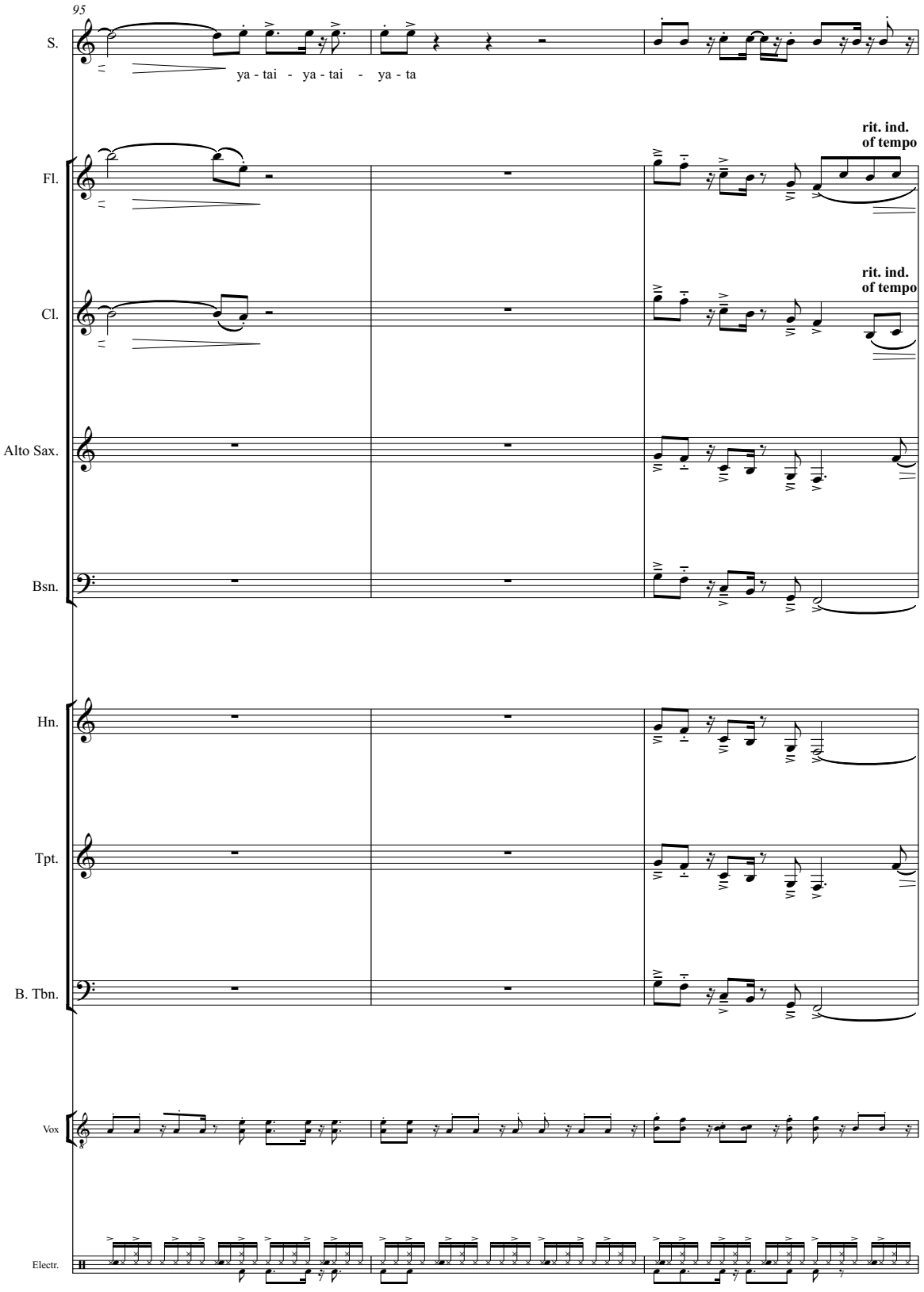

80
F
S.
light tongue on second note
Fl.
mf
Cl.
mf
Alto Sax.
mf
Bsn.
mf
Hn.
mf
put down mute
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
mf
Vox
Electr.

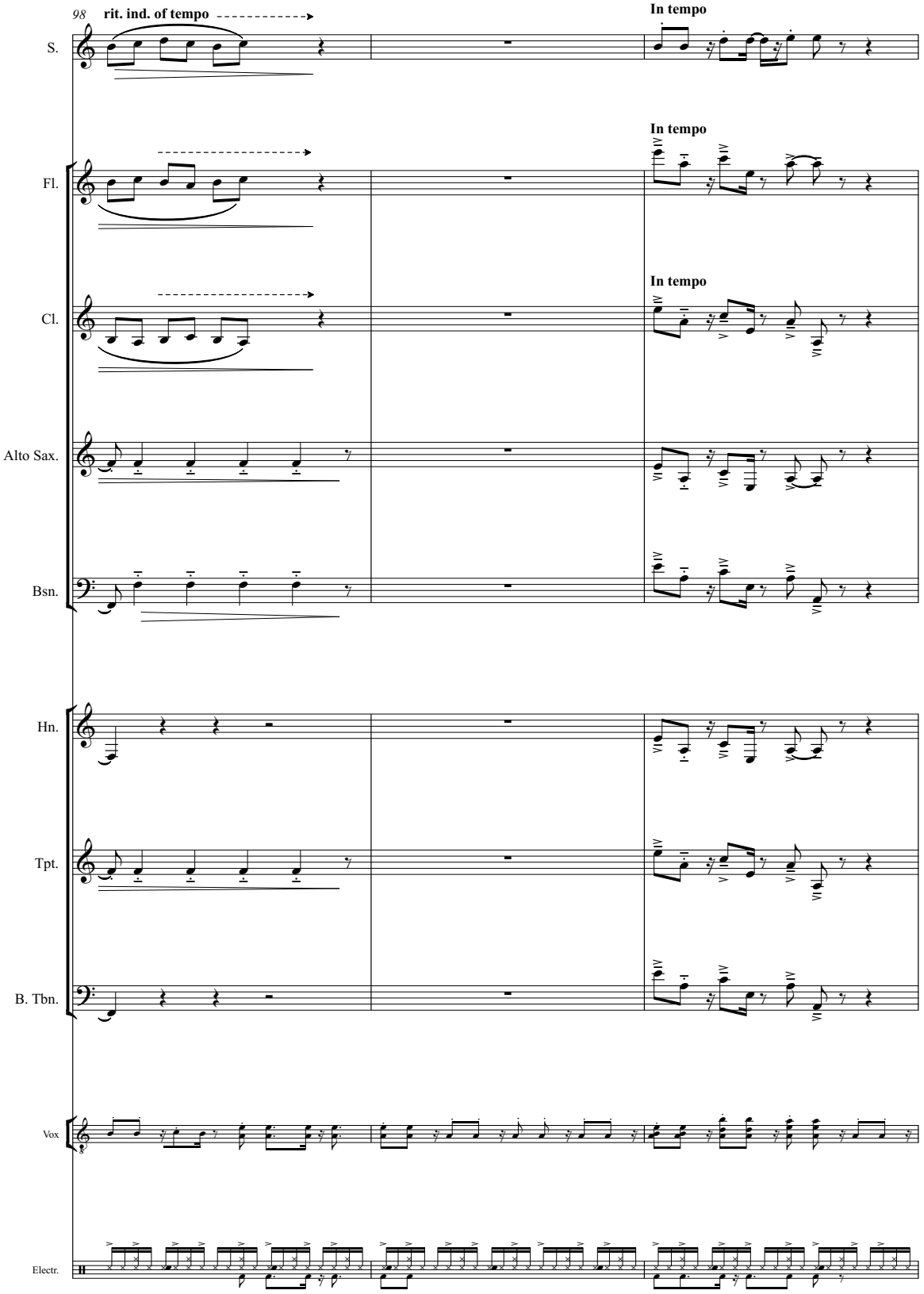

83
S.
mf
Fl.
mf
Cl.
mf
Alto Sax.
mf
Bsn.
mf
Hn.
mf
Tpt.
(without mute)
p
B. Tbn.
mf
Vox
Electr.

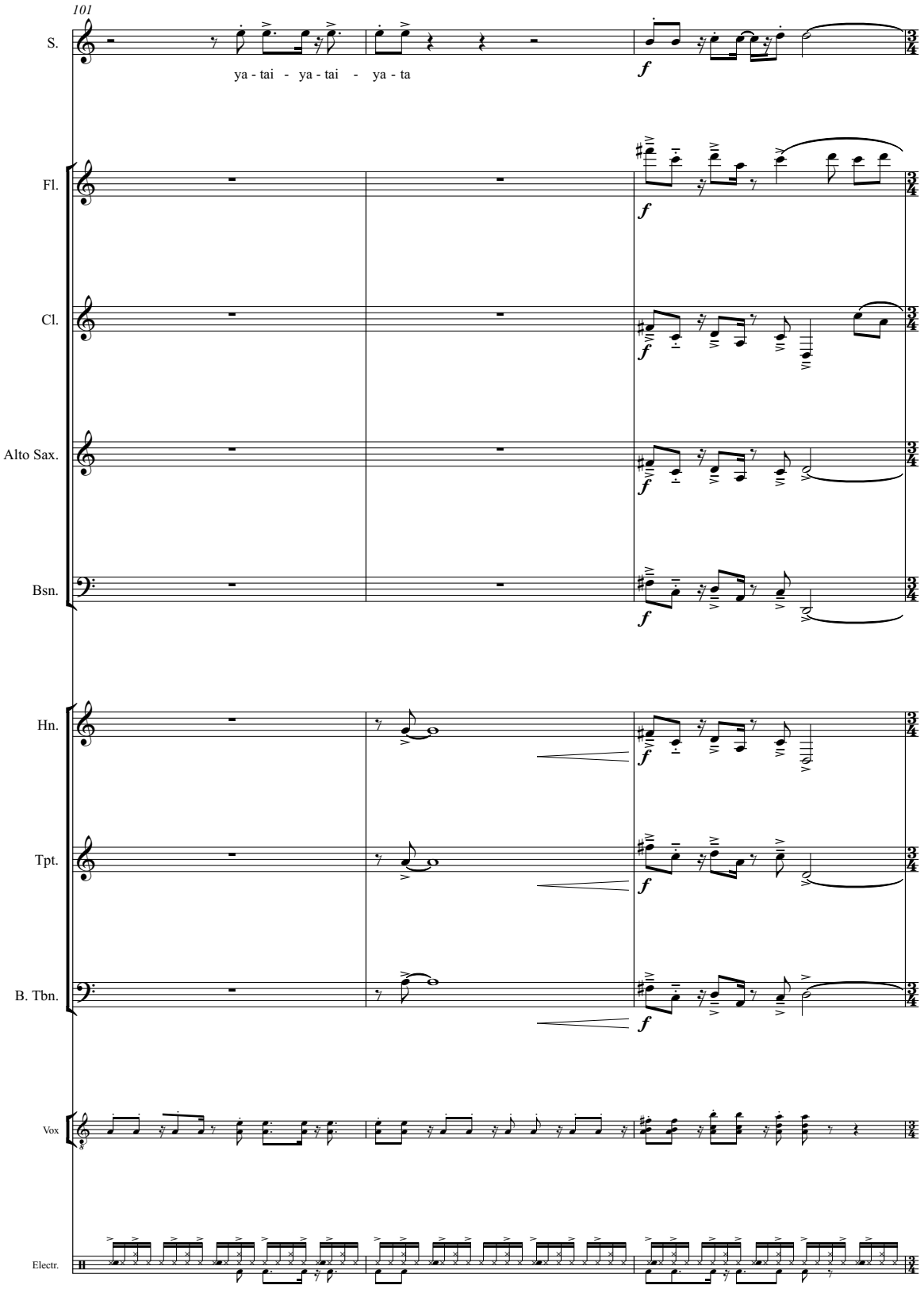

86
G
S.
ya - tai - ya - tai - ya - ta
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.

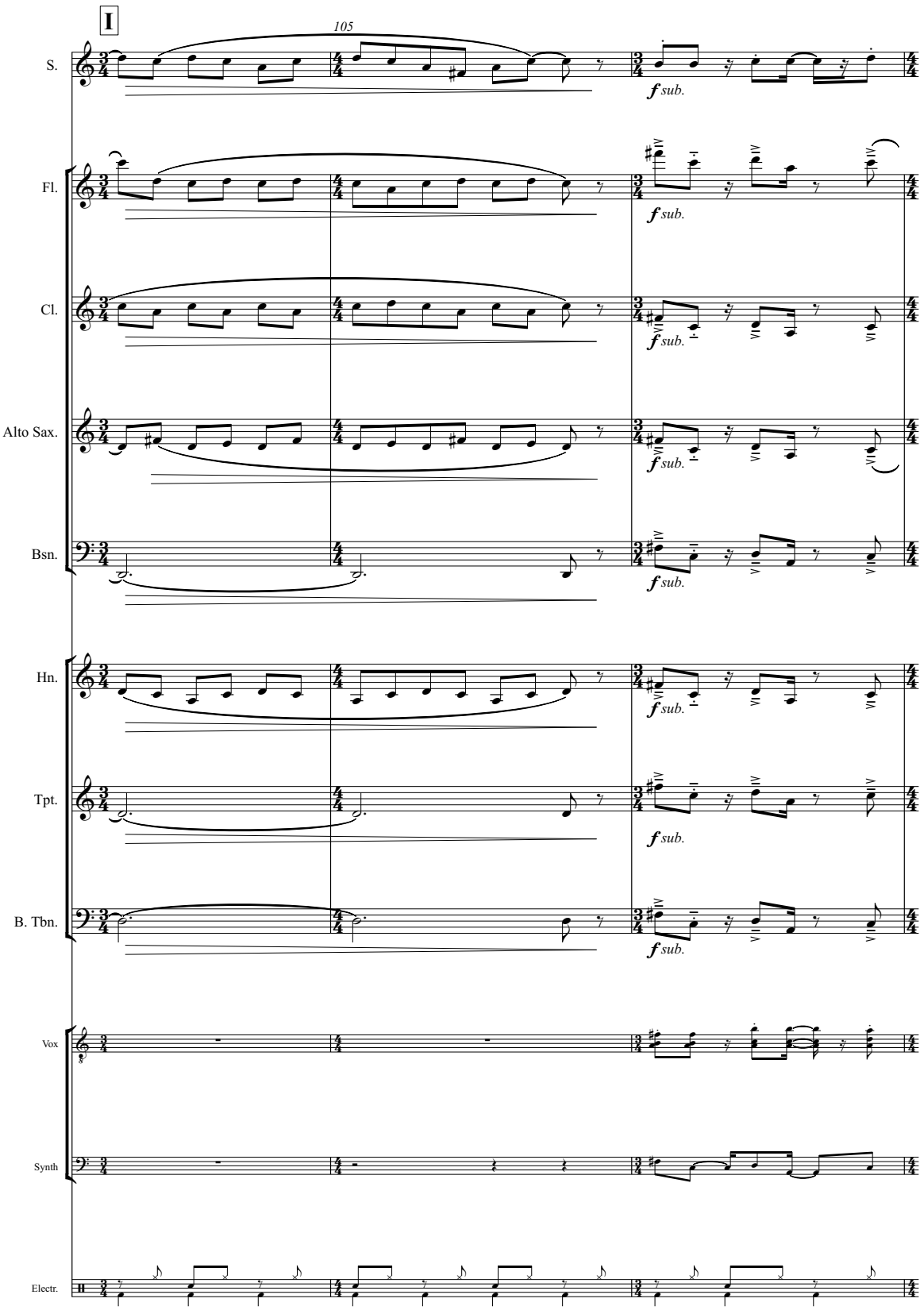

89
S.
ya - tai - ya - tai - ya - ta
rit. ind.
of tempo
Fl.
rit. ind.
of tempo
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
mf
f
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.

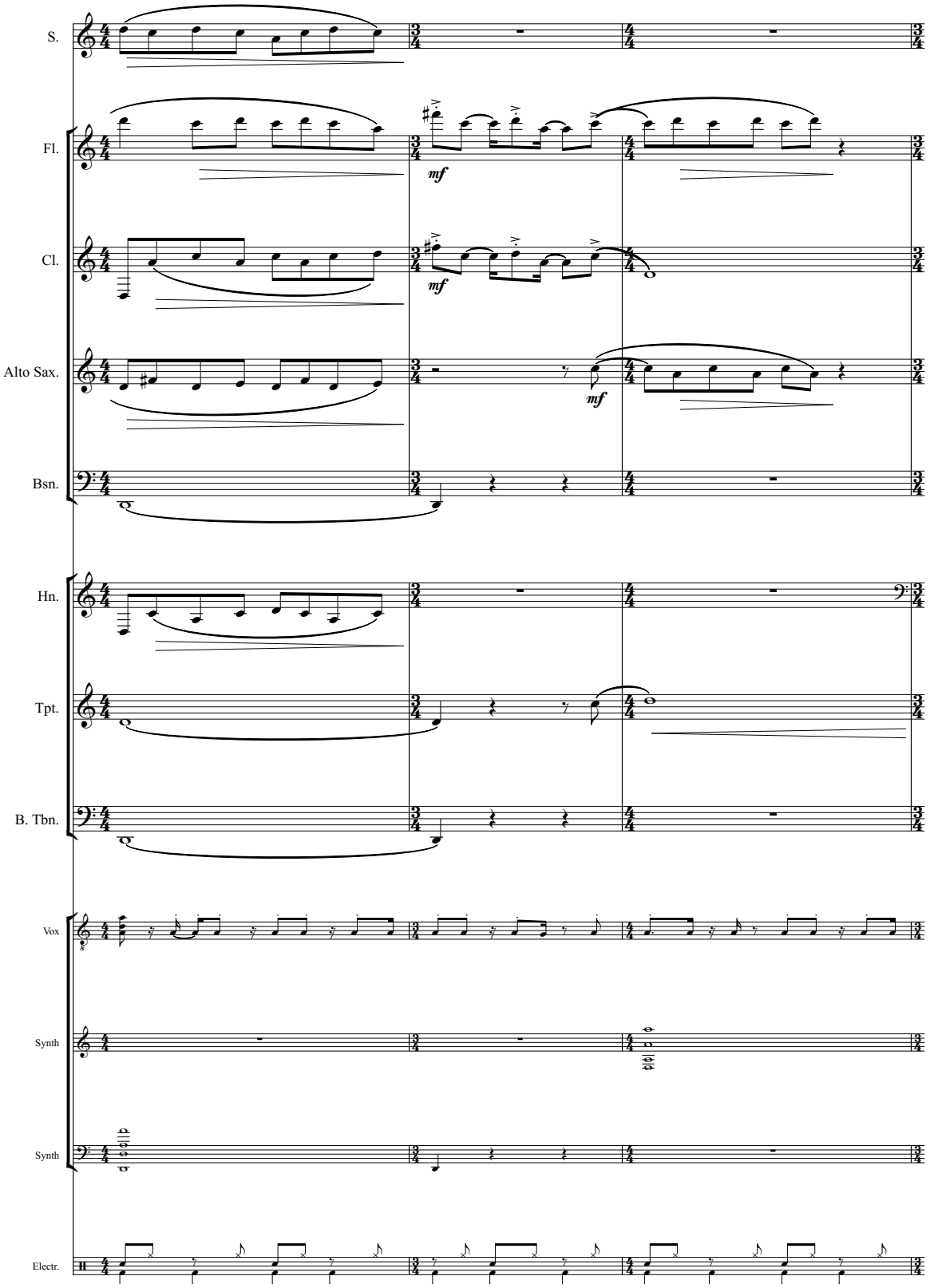

H
92
rit. ind. of tempo
In tempo
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.
f

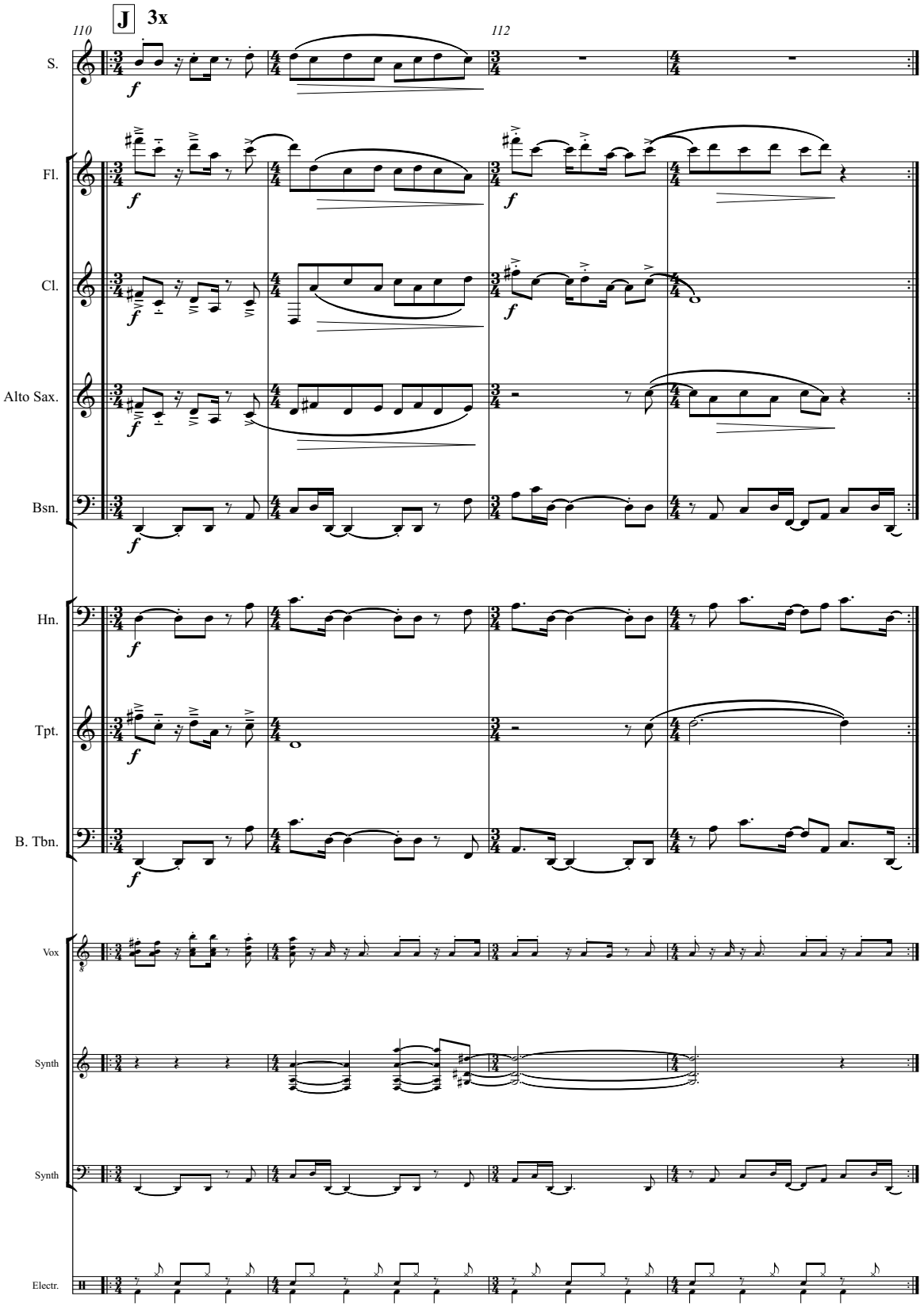

95
S.
ya - tai - ya - tai - ya - ta
rit. ind.
of tempo
Fl.
rit. ind.
of tempo
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.

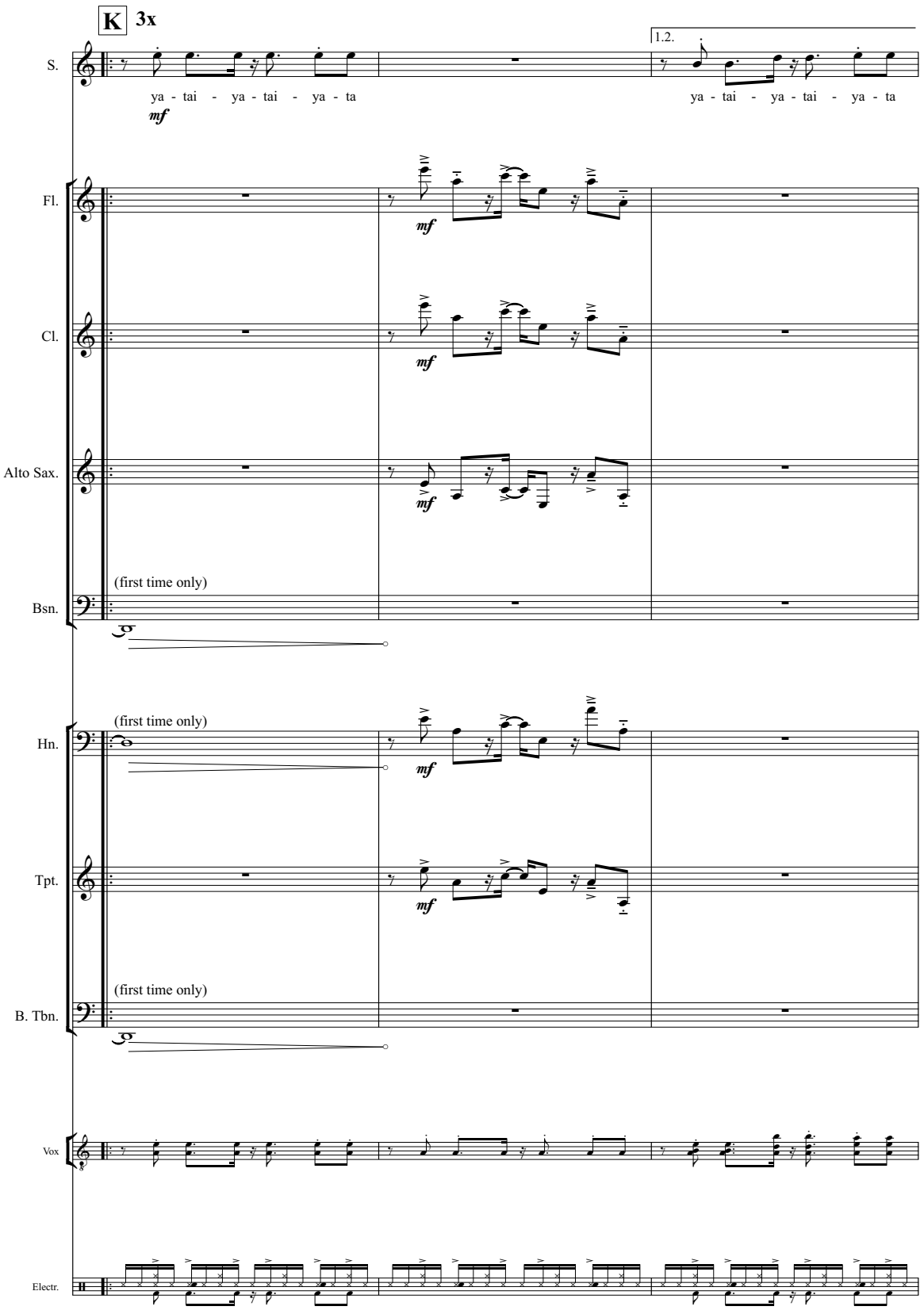

98
rit. ind. of tempo
In tempo
S.
In tempo
Fl.
In tempo
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.

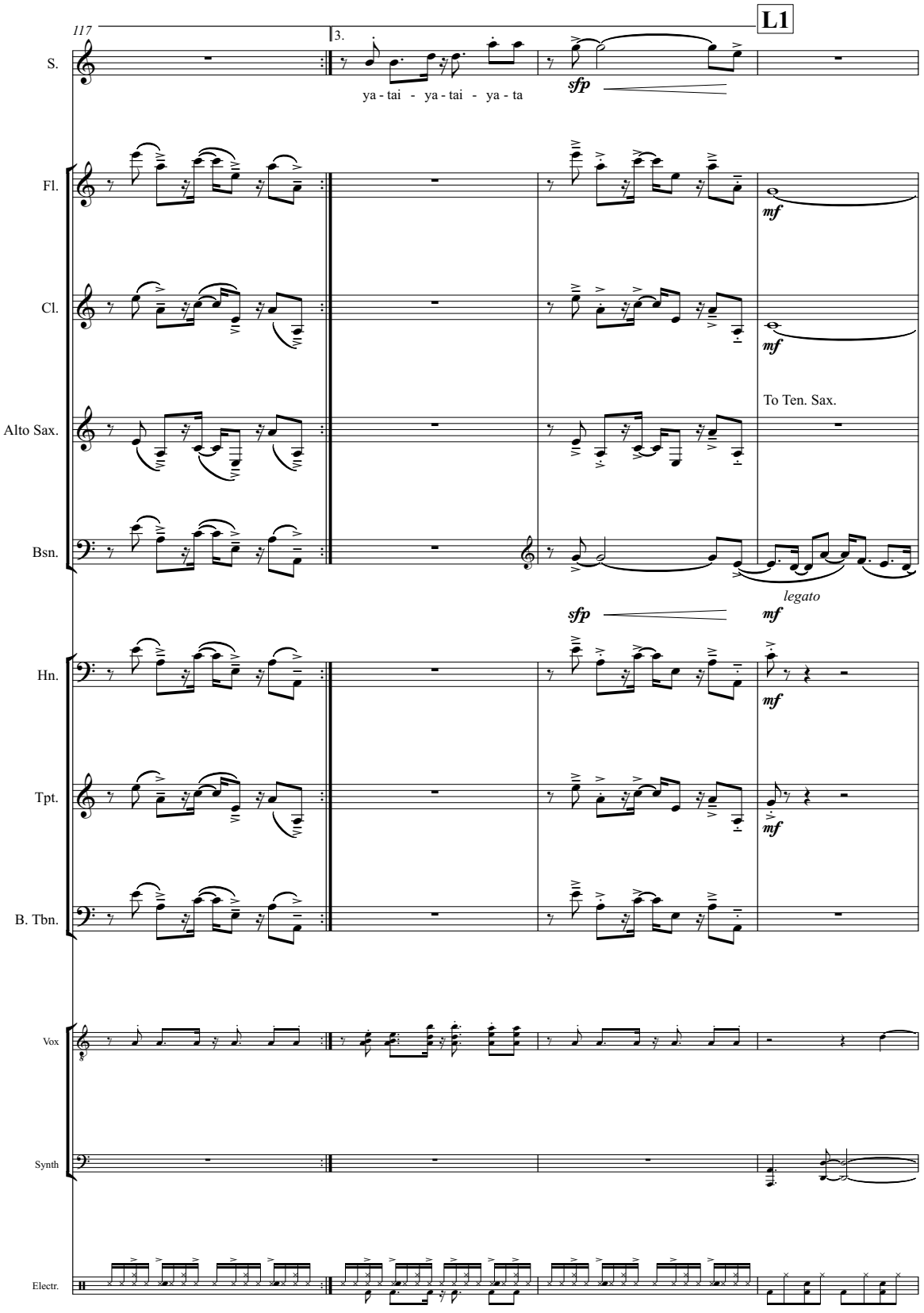

101
S.
ya - tai - ya - tai - ya - ta
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.

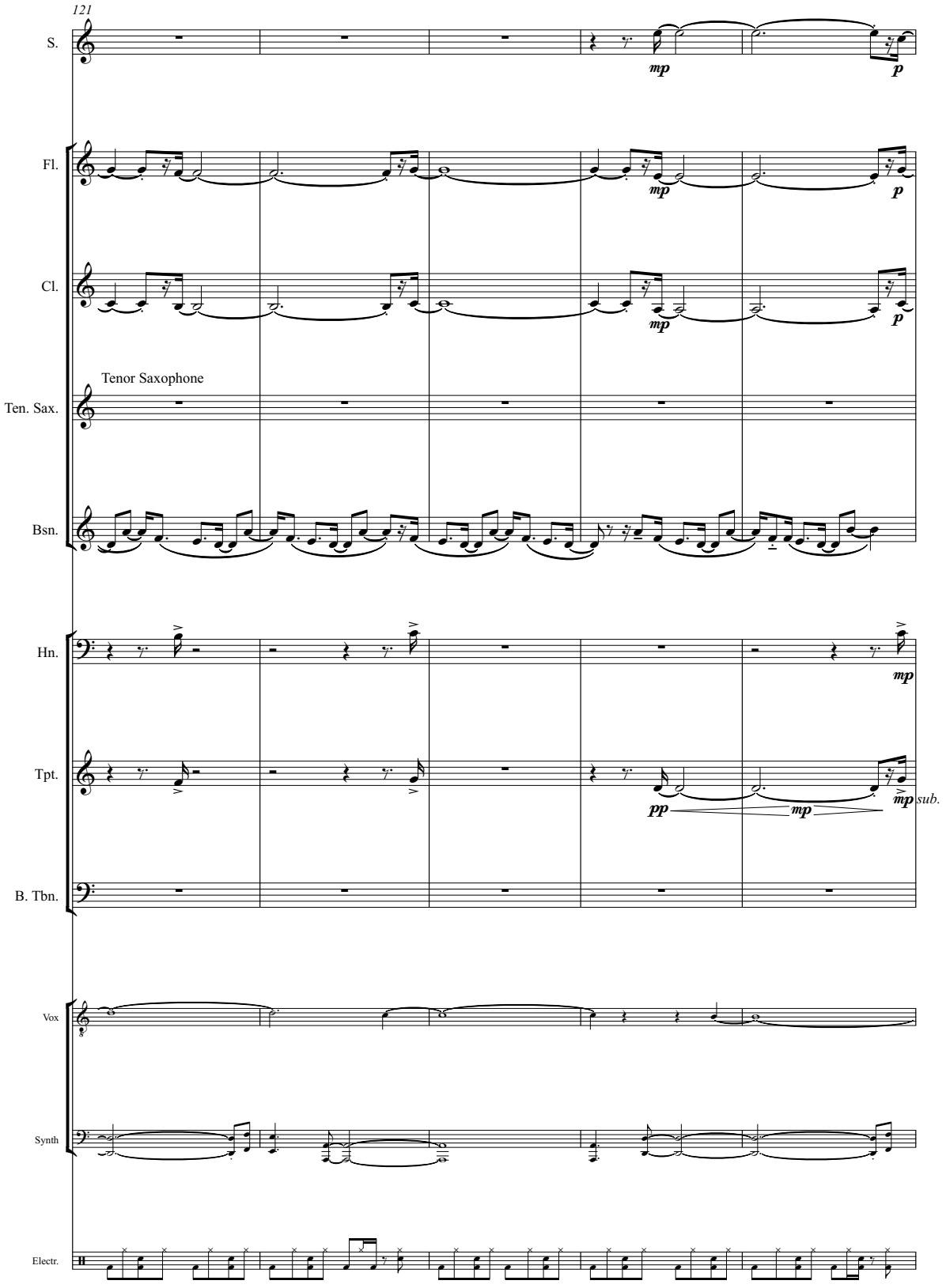

I
105
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Electr.
f sub.

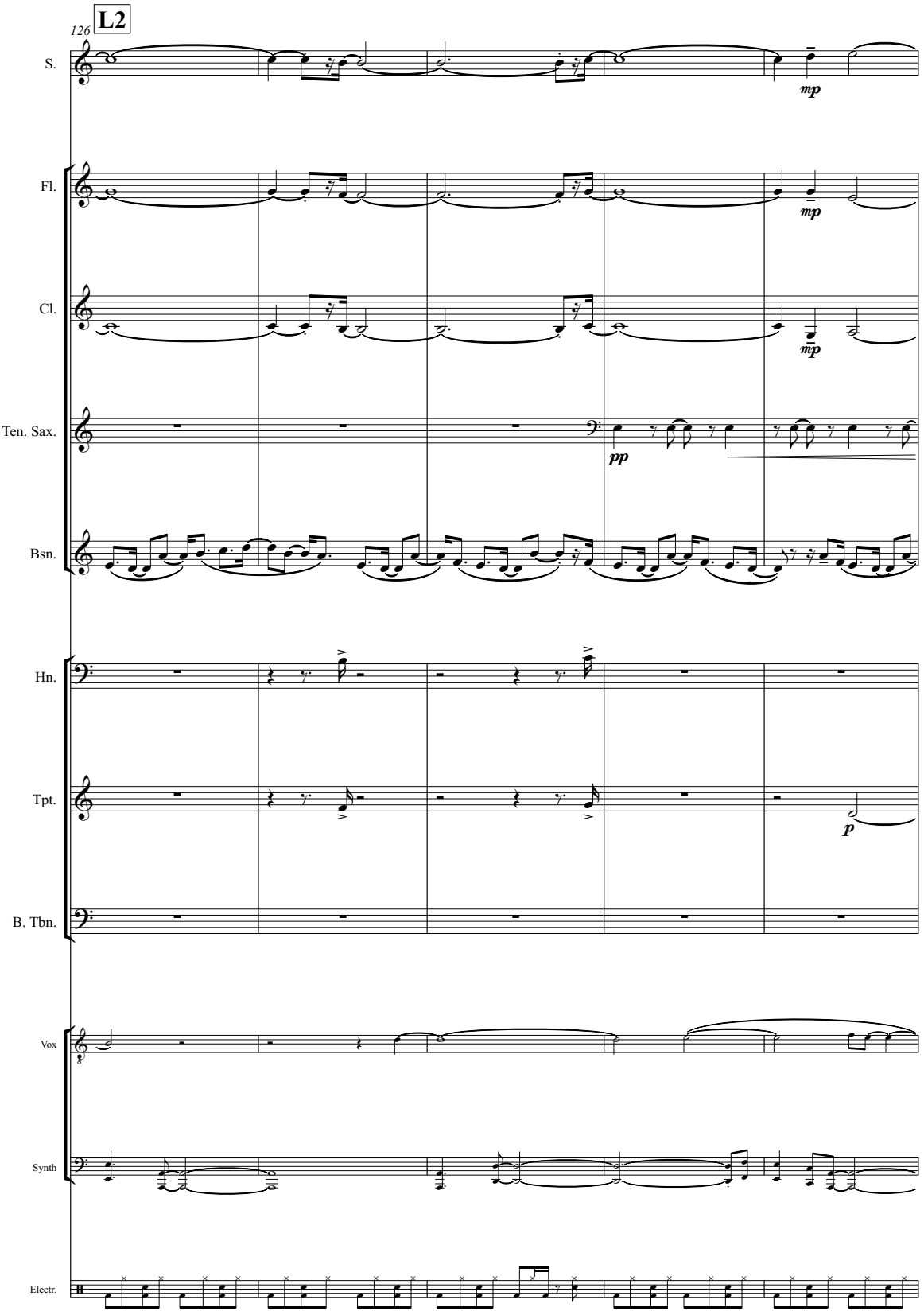

S.
Fl.
mf
Cl.
mf
Alto Sax.
mf
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Synth
Electr.

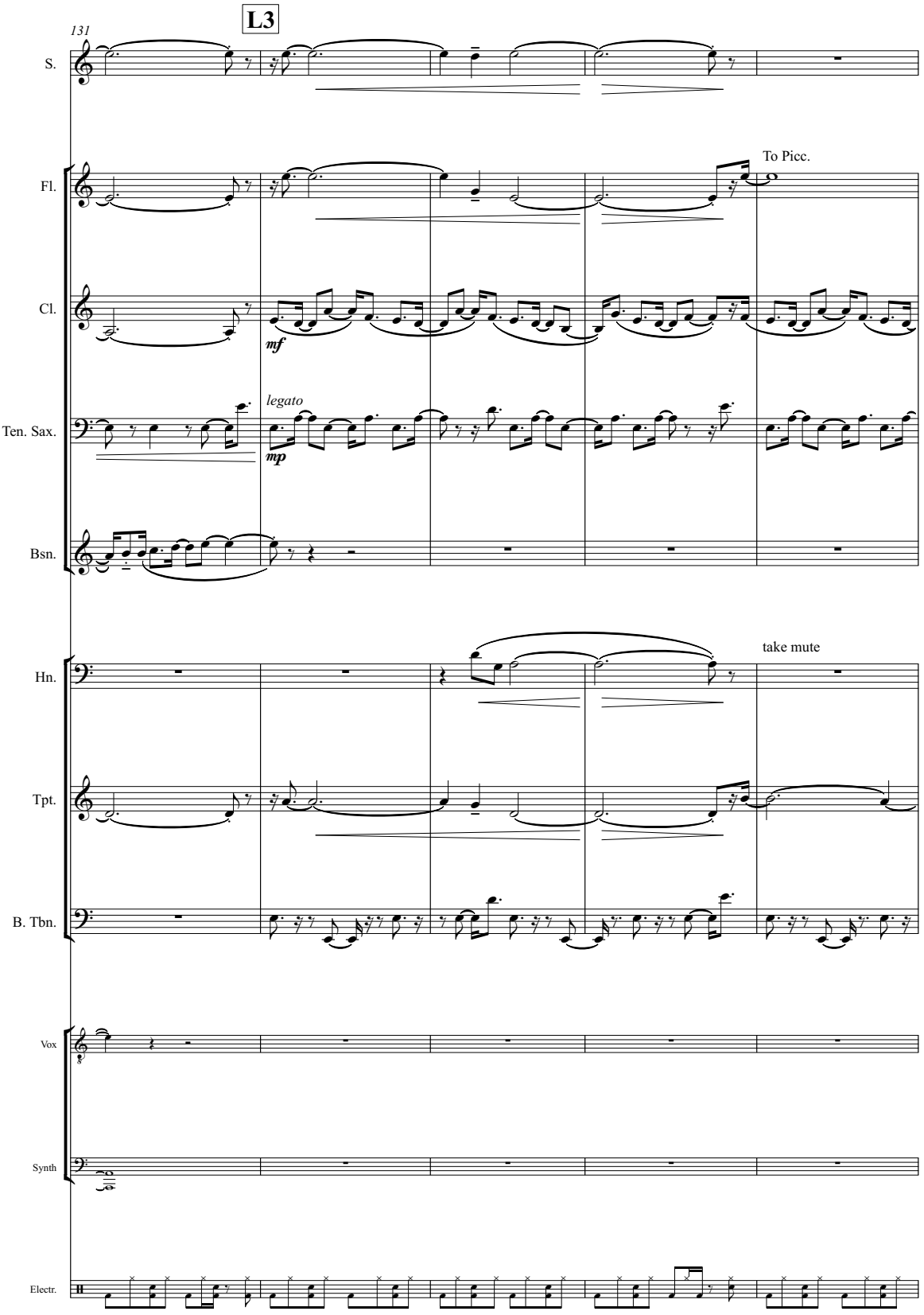

J
3x
110
112
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Synth
Electr.

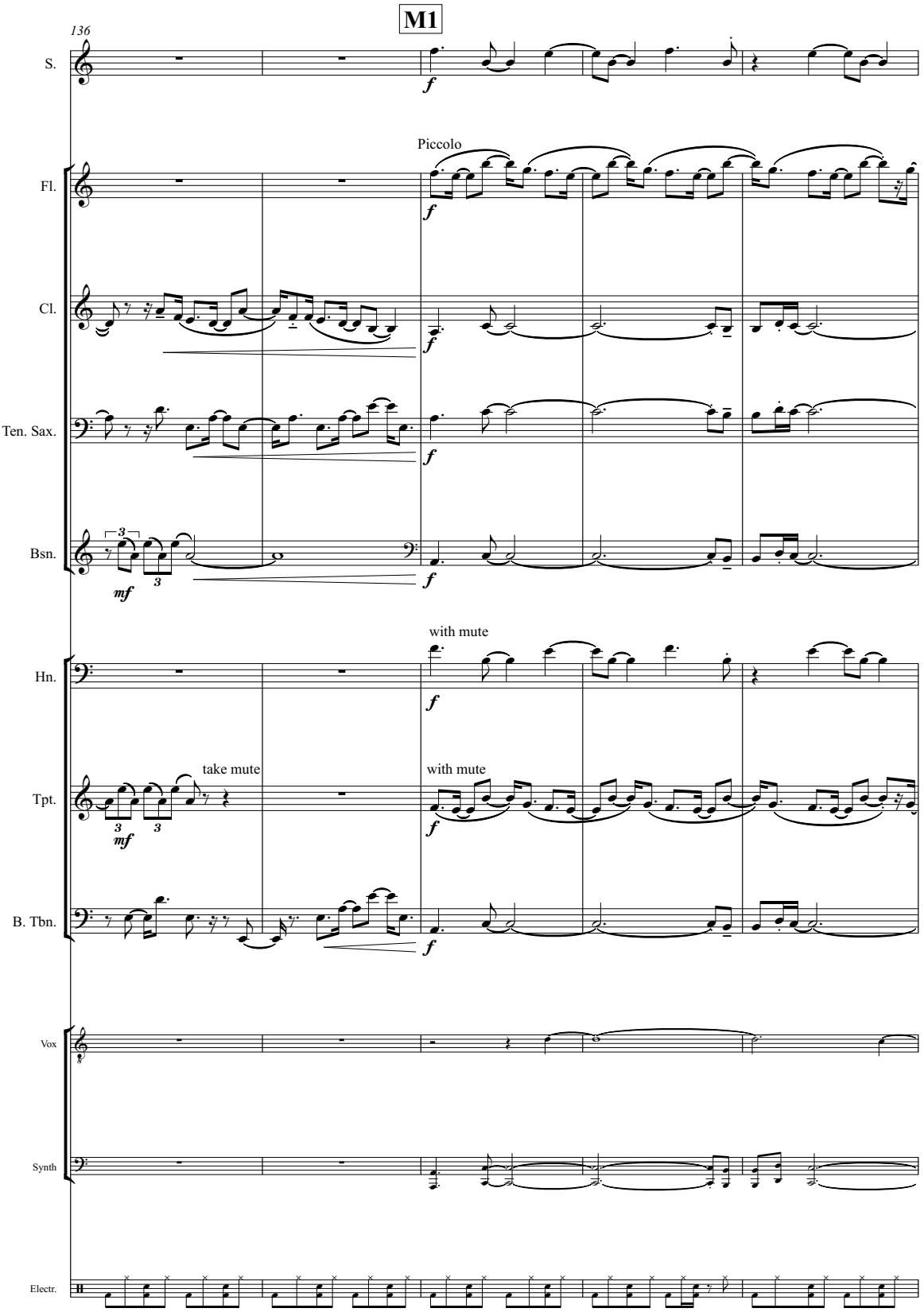

K 3x
1.2.
S.
ya - tai - ya - tai - ya - ta
ya - tai - ya - tai - ya - ta
mf
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
(first time only)
Hn.
(first time only)
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
(first time only)
Vox
Electr.

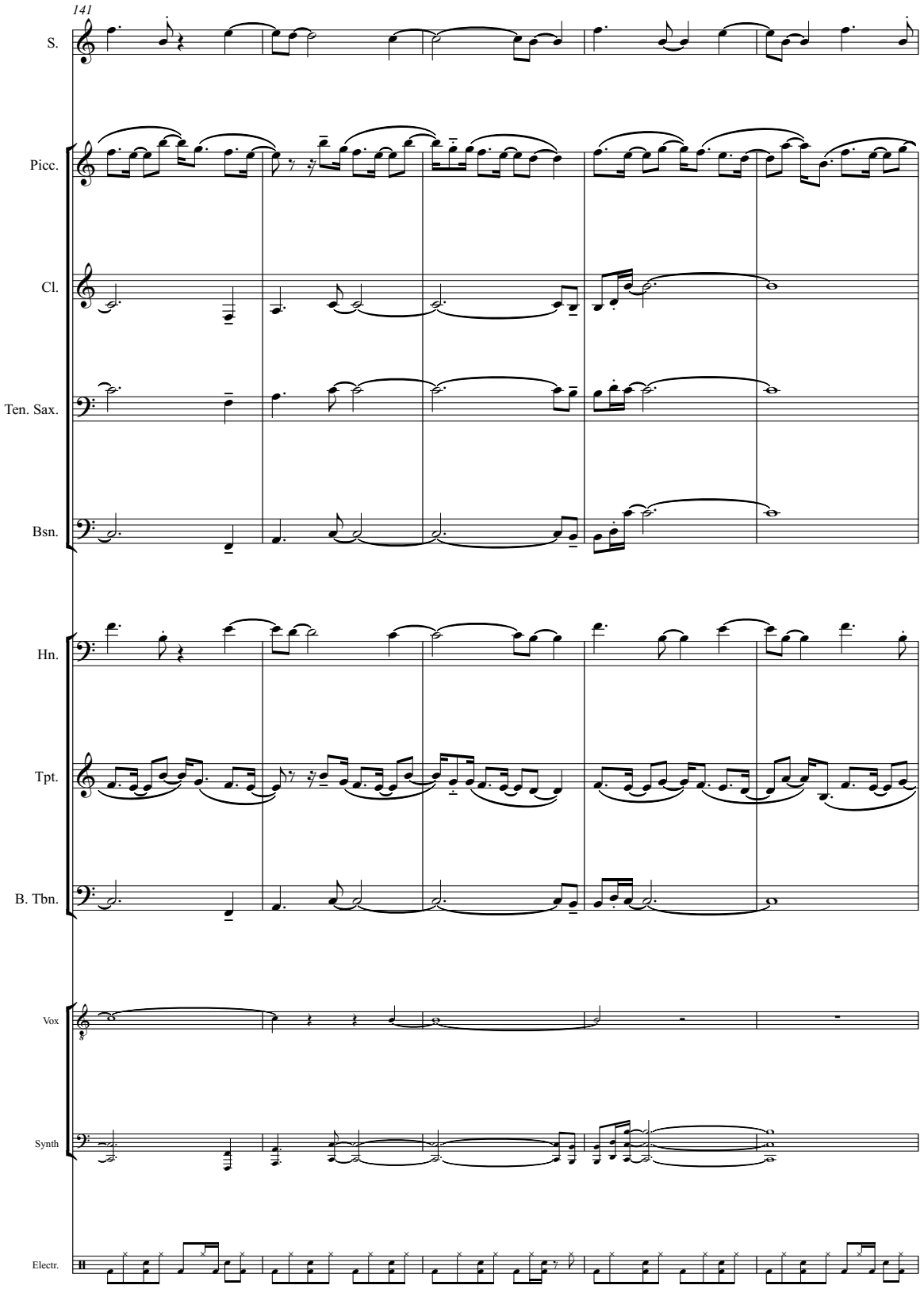

117
L1
3.
S.
ya - tai - ya - tai - ya - ta
sfp
Fl.
mf
Cl.
mf
Alto Sax.
To Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
legato
sfp
mf
Hn.
mf
Tpt.
mf
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Electr.

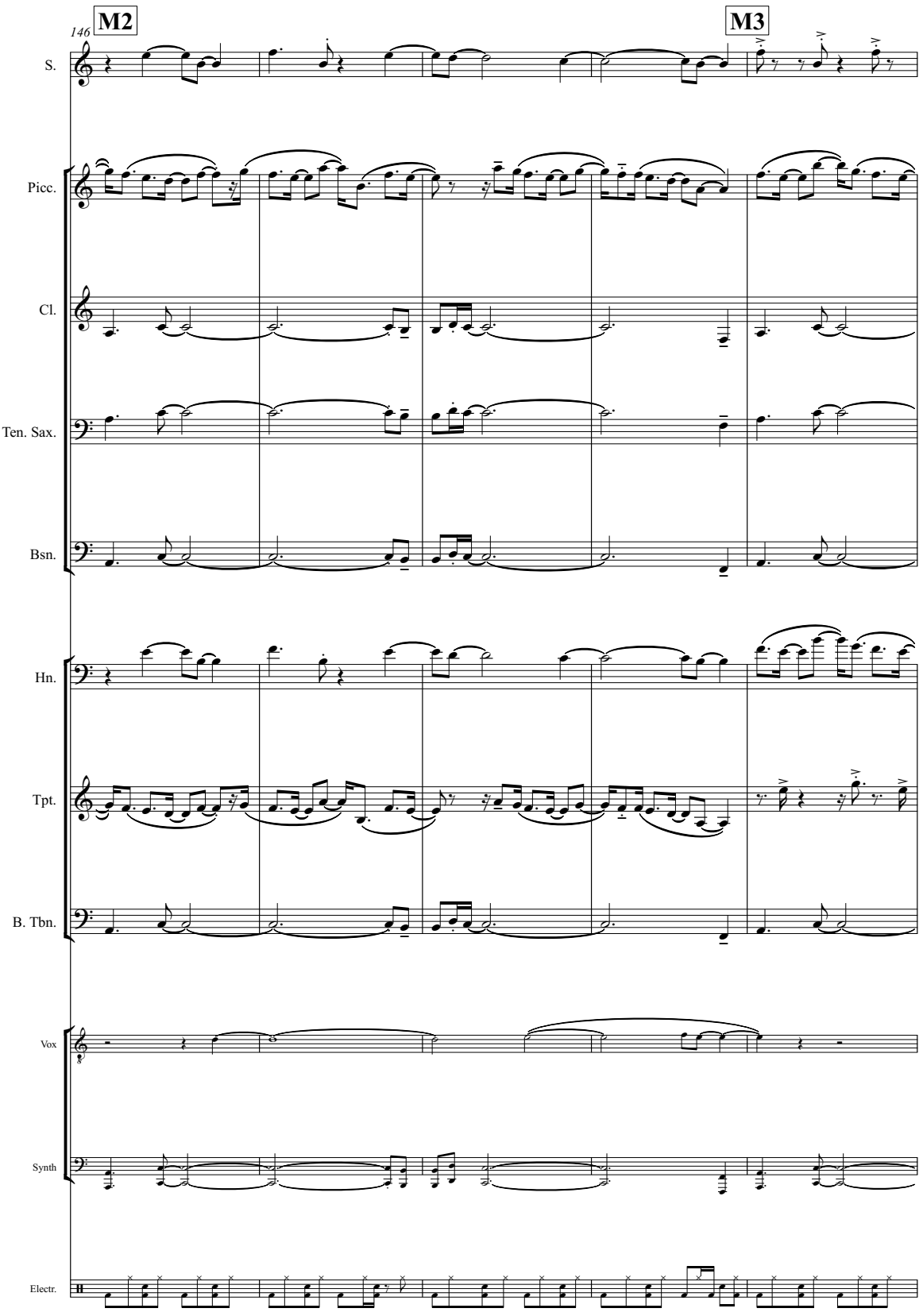

121
S.
mp
p
Fl.
mp
p
Cl.
mp
p
Tenor Saxophone
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
mp
Tpt.
pp
mp
mp sub.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Electr.

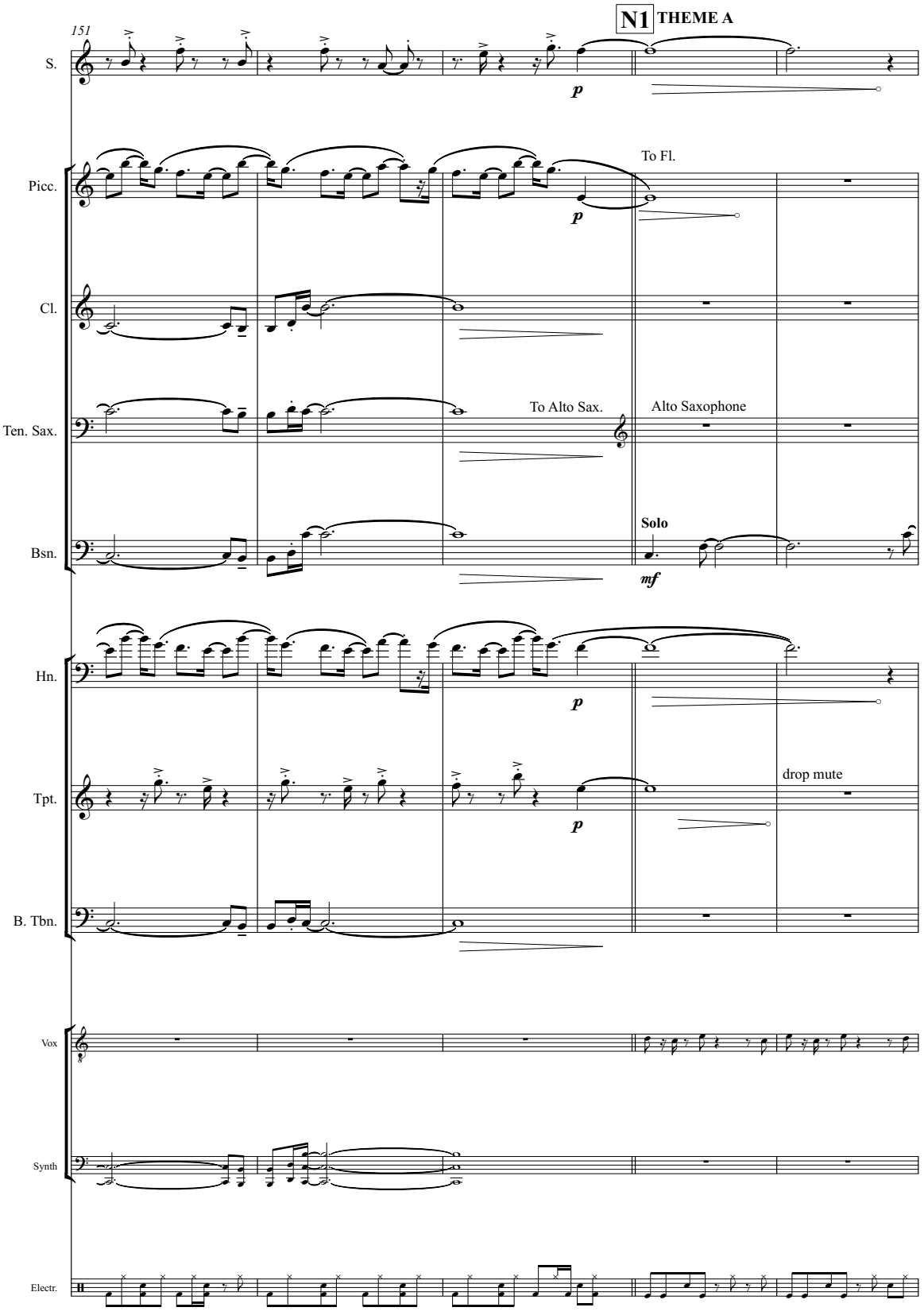

126
L2
S.
mp
Fl.
mp
Cl.
mp
Ten. Sax.
pp
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
p
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Electr.

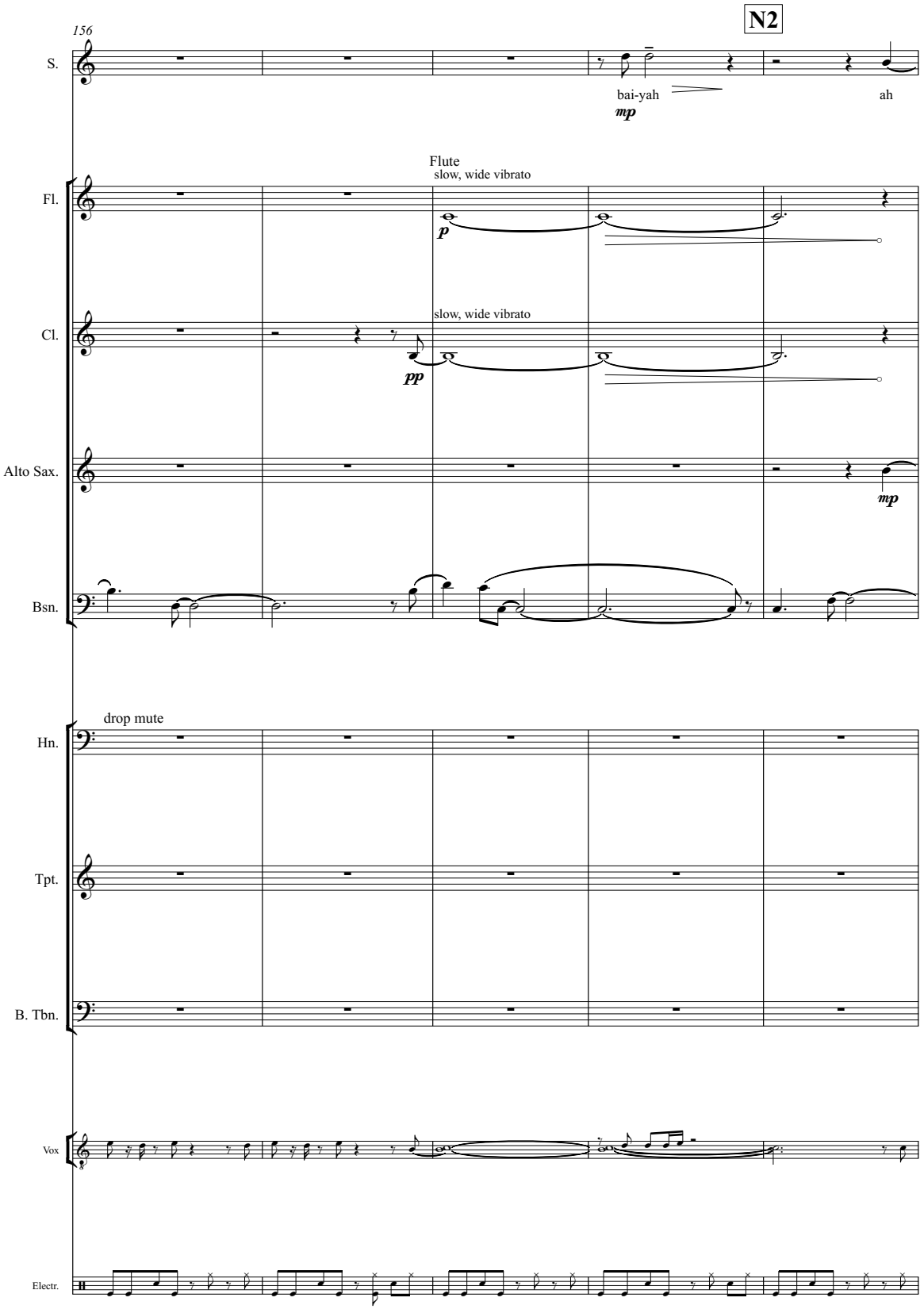

131
L3
S.
Fl.
To Picc.
Cl.
mf
Ten. Sax.
legato
mp
Bsn.
Hn.
take mute
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Electr.

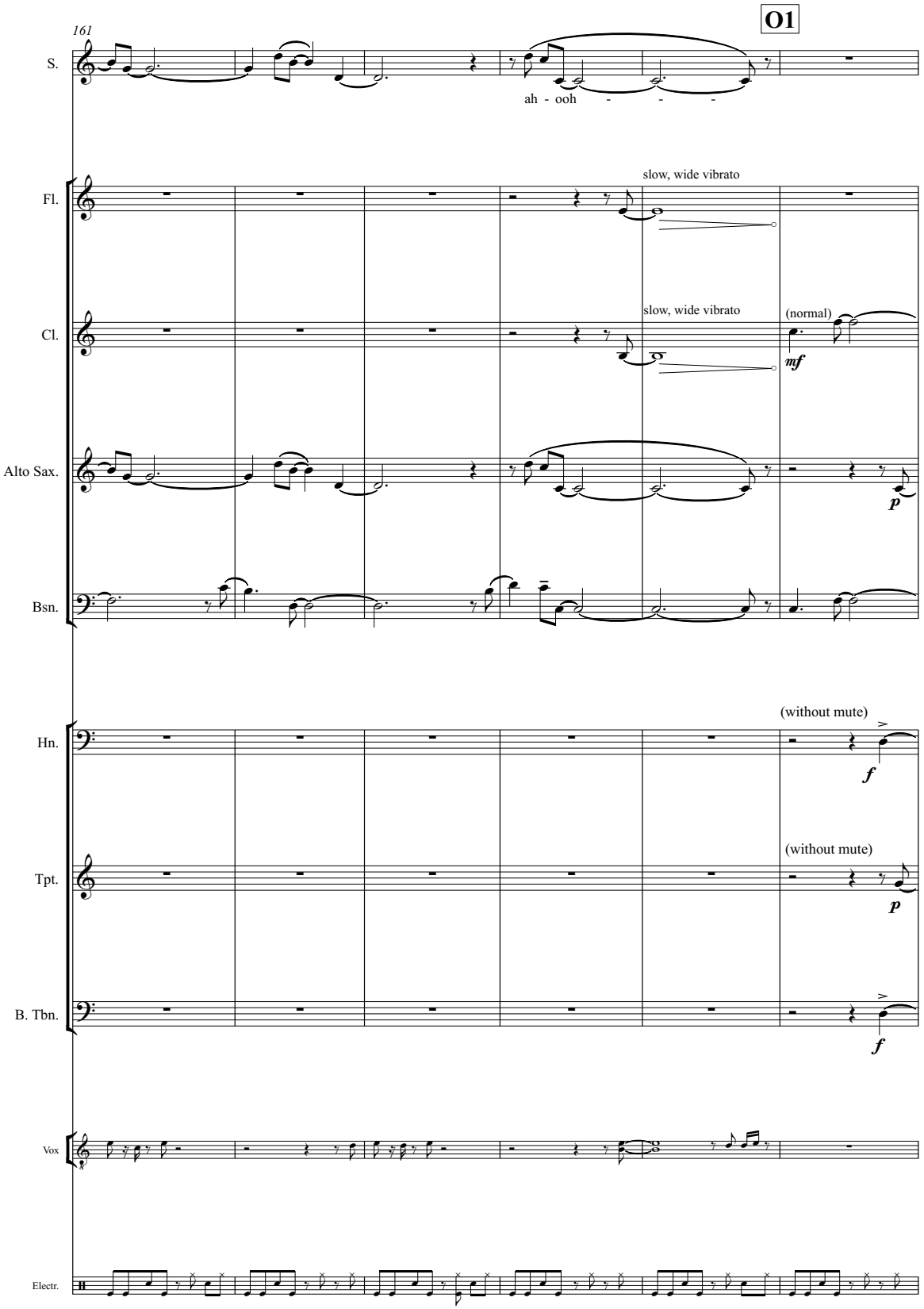

M1
136
S.
Piccolo
Fl.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
with mute
Hn.
take mute
with mute
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Electr.

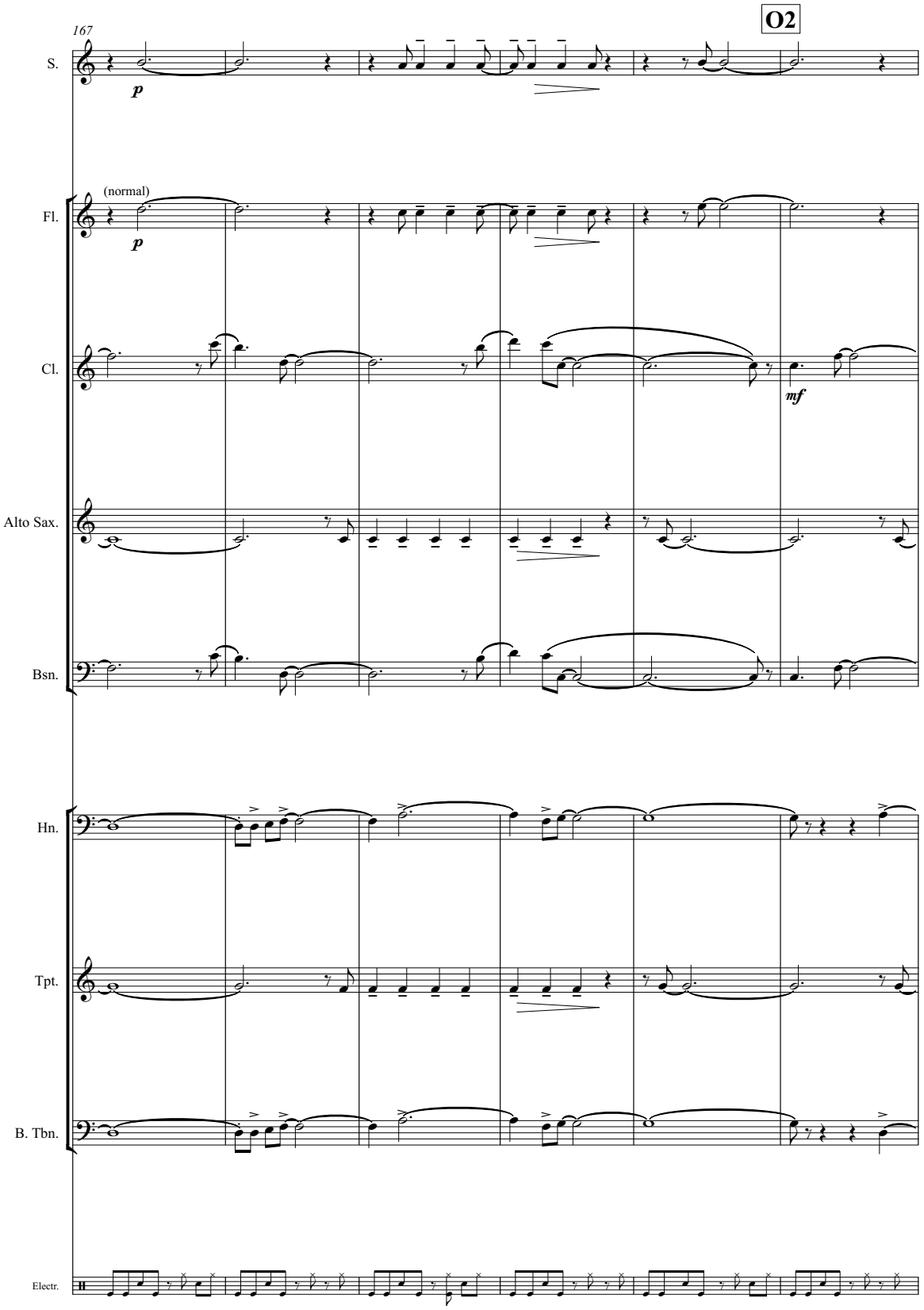

141
S.
Picc.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Electr.

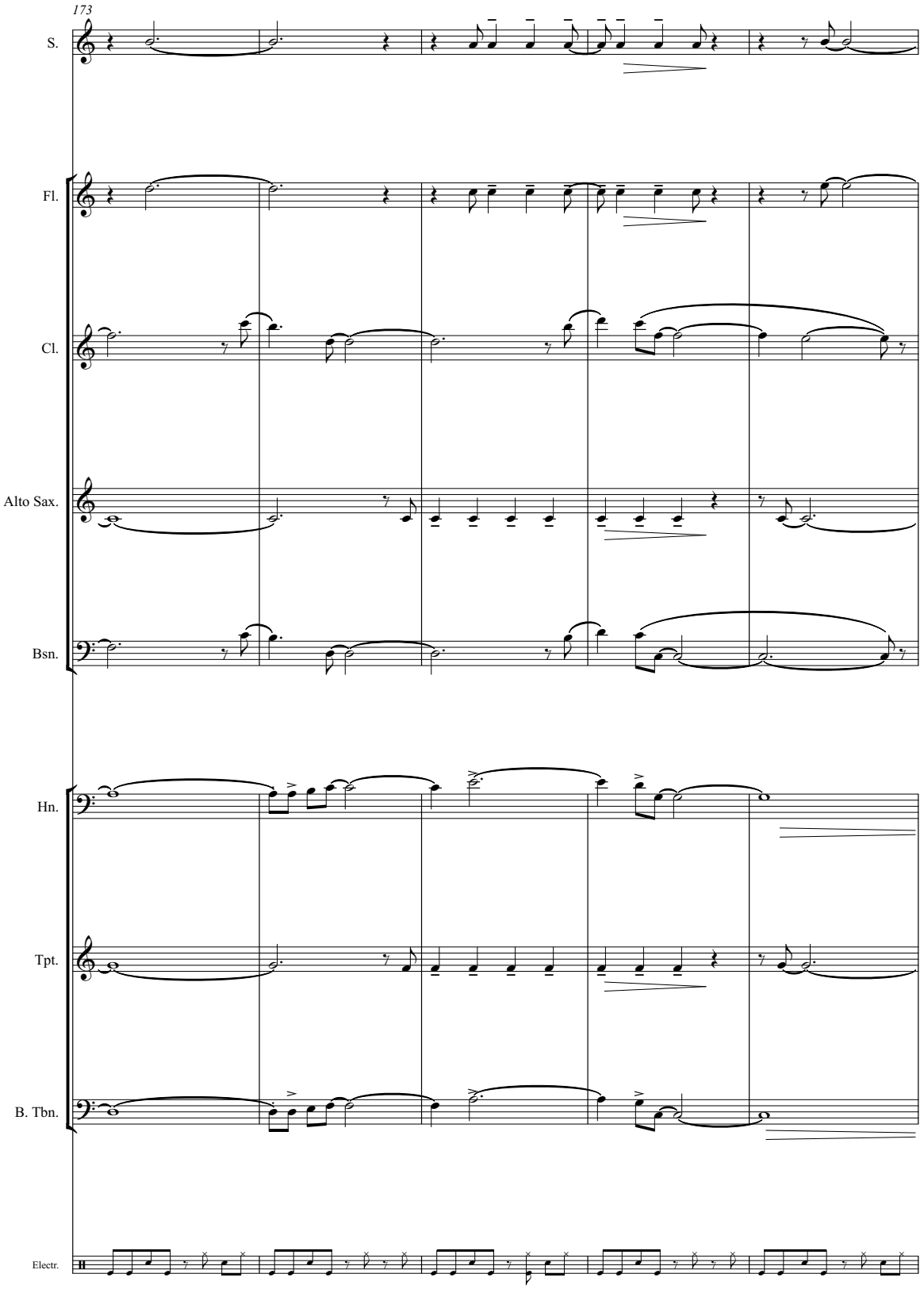

146
M2
M3
S.
Picc.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Electr.

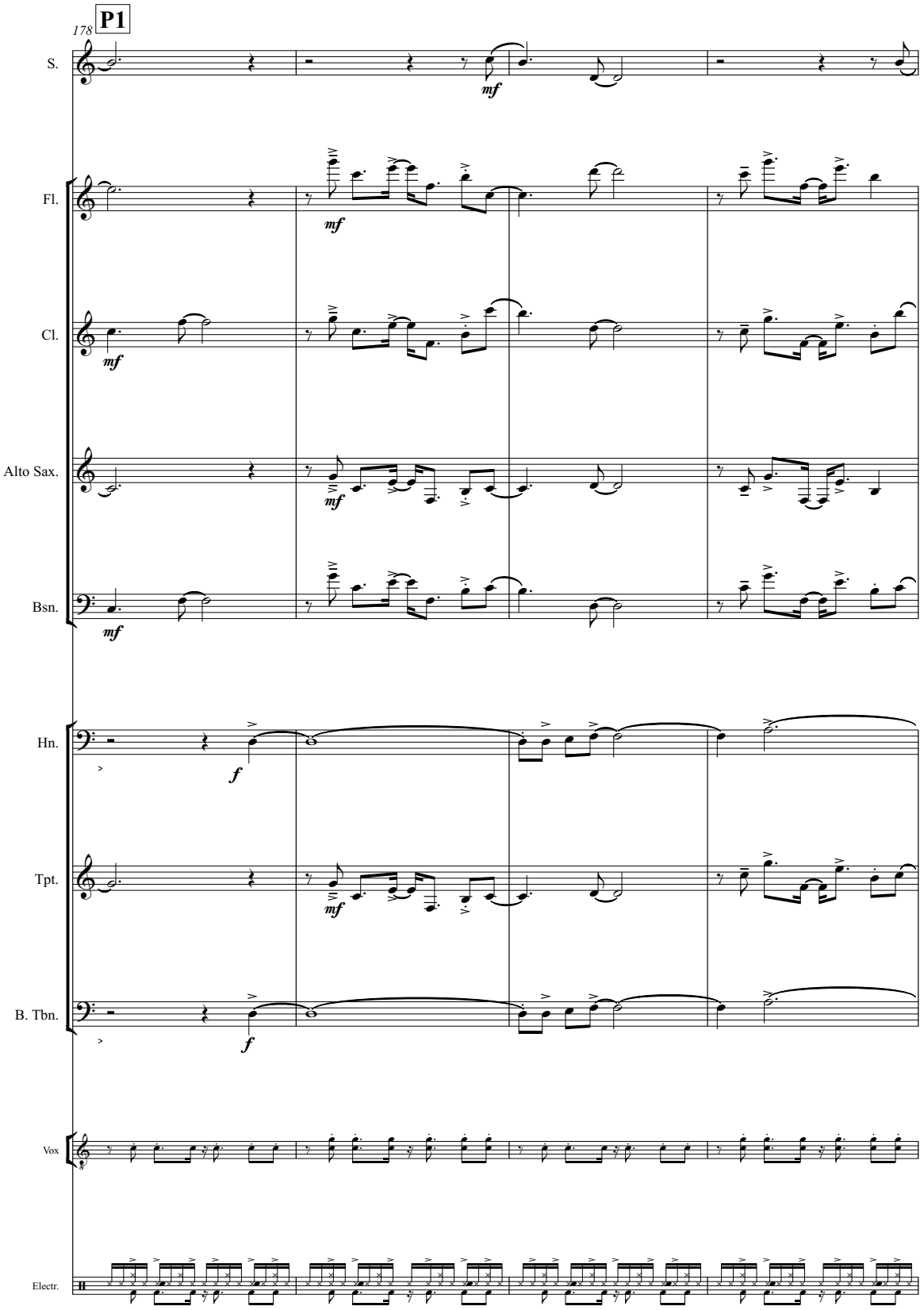

151
N1 THEME A
S.
p
Picc.
To Fl.
p
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
To Alto Sax.
Alto Saxophone
Bsn.
Solo
mf
Hn.
p
Tpt.
drop mute
p
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Electr.

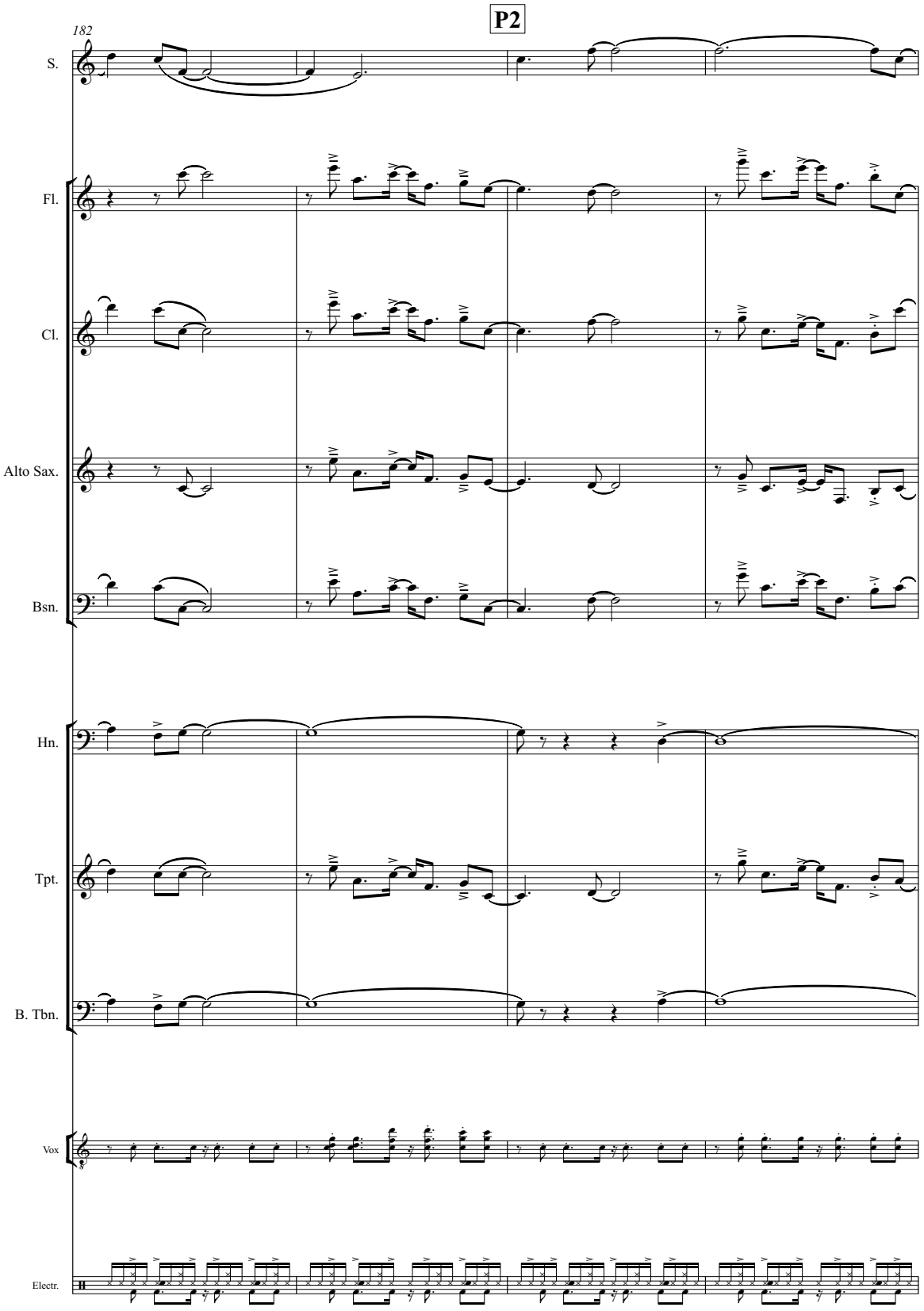

156
N2
S.
bai-yah
ah
mp
Flute
slow, wide vibrato
Fl.
p
slow, wide vibrato
Cl.
pp
Alto Sax.
mp
Bsn.
drop mute
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.

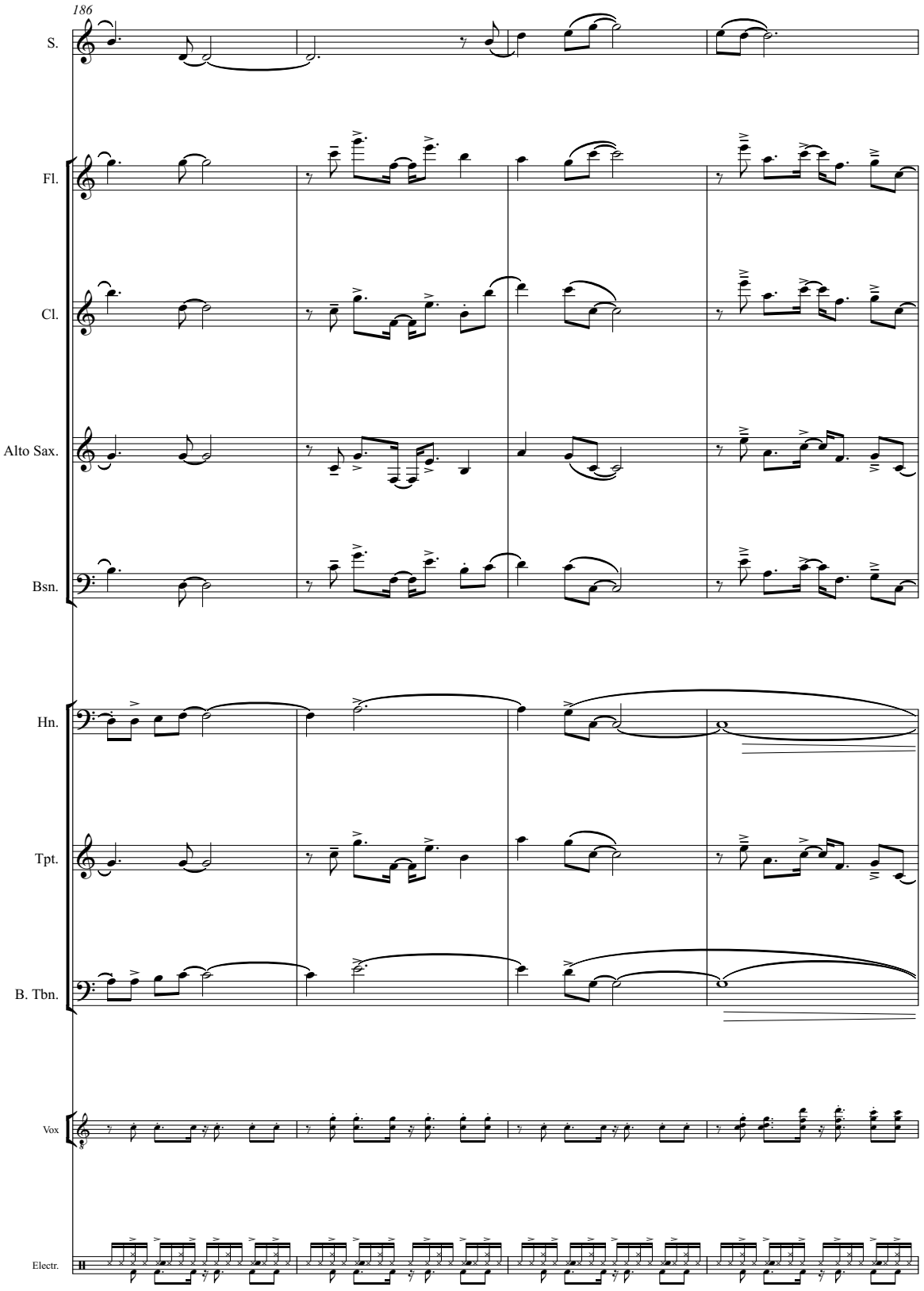

161
O1
S.
ah - ooh - - -
Fl.
slow, wide vibrato
Cl.
slow, wide vibrato
(normal)
mf
Alto Sax.
p
Bsn.
Hn.
(without mute)
f
Tpt.
(without mute)
p
B. Tbn.
f
Vox
Electr.

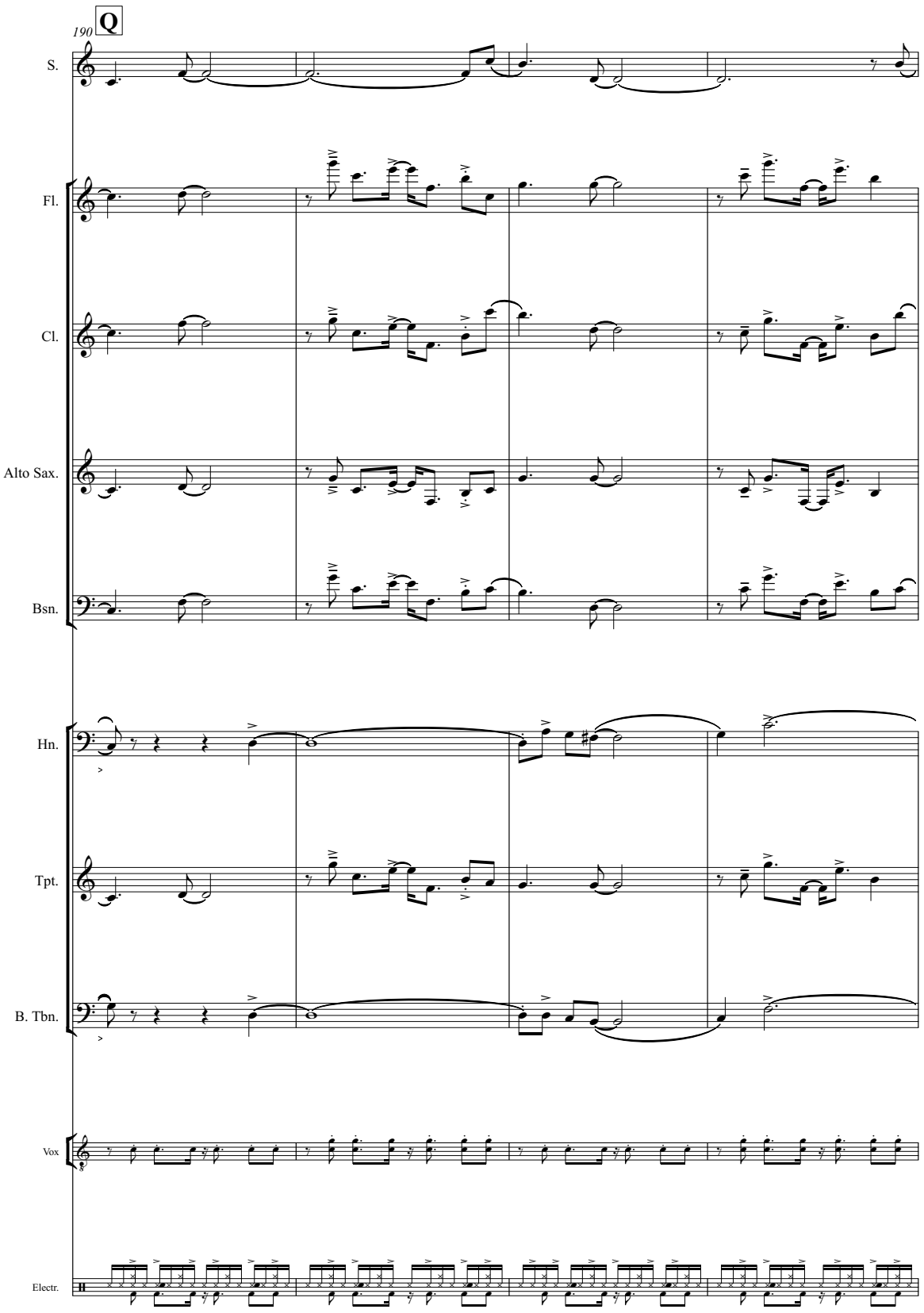

167
O2
S.
p
(normal)
Fl.
p
Cl.
mf
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Electr.

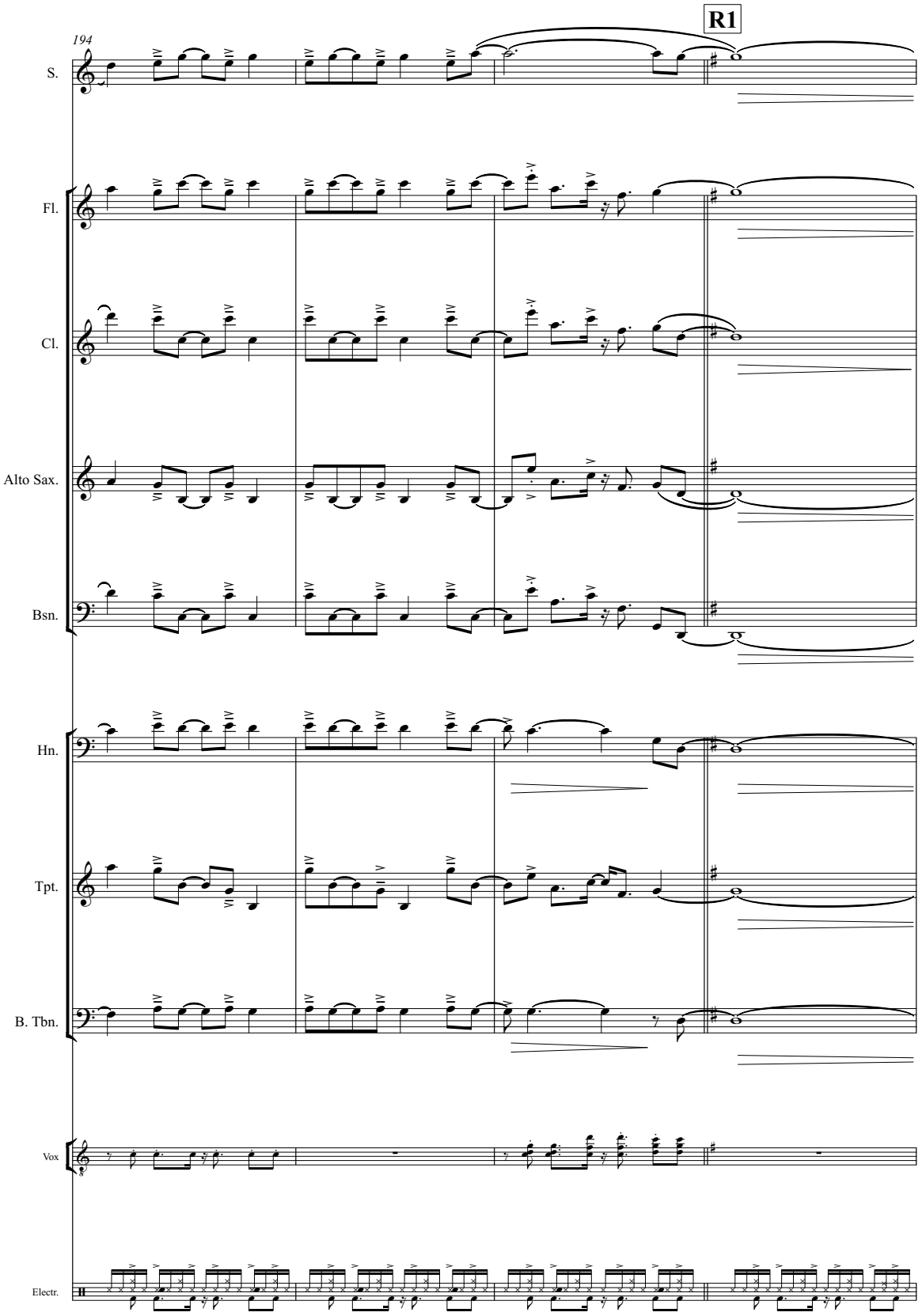

173
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Electr.

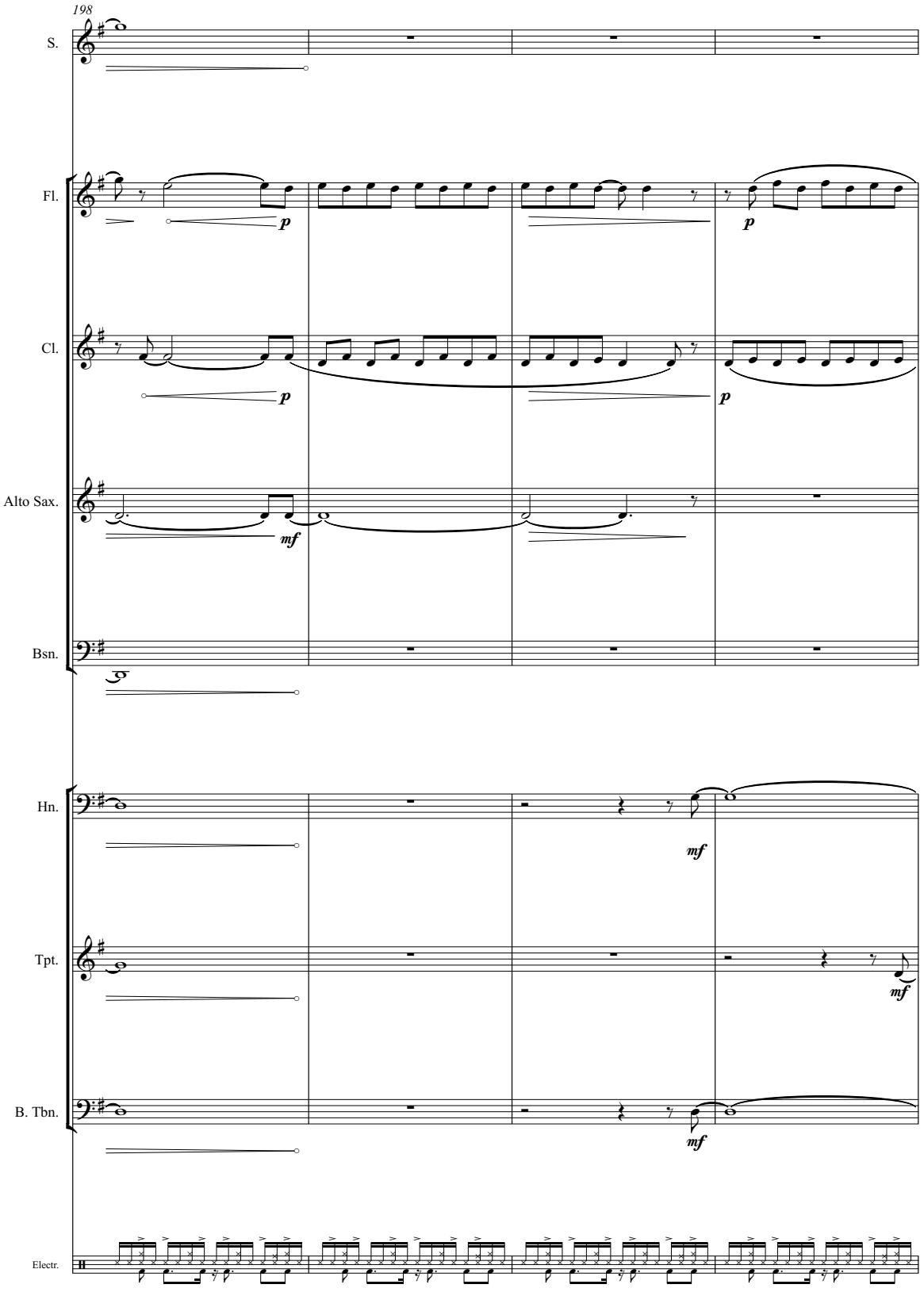

178
P1
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.
mf
f

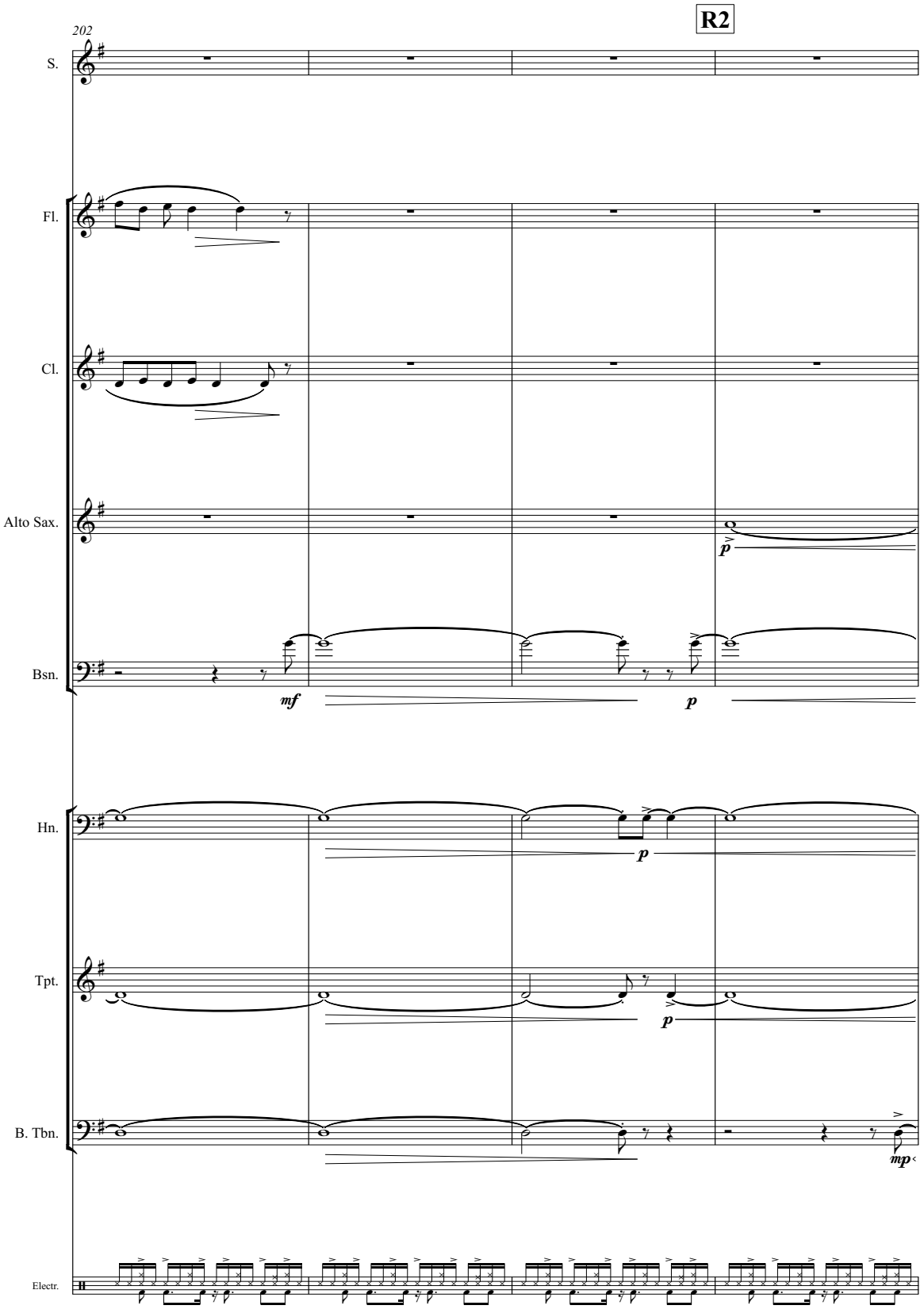

P2
182
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.

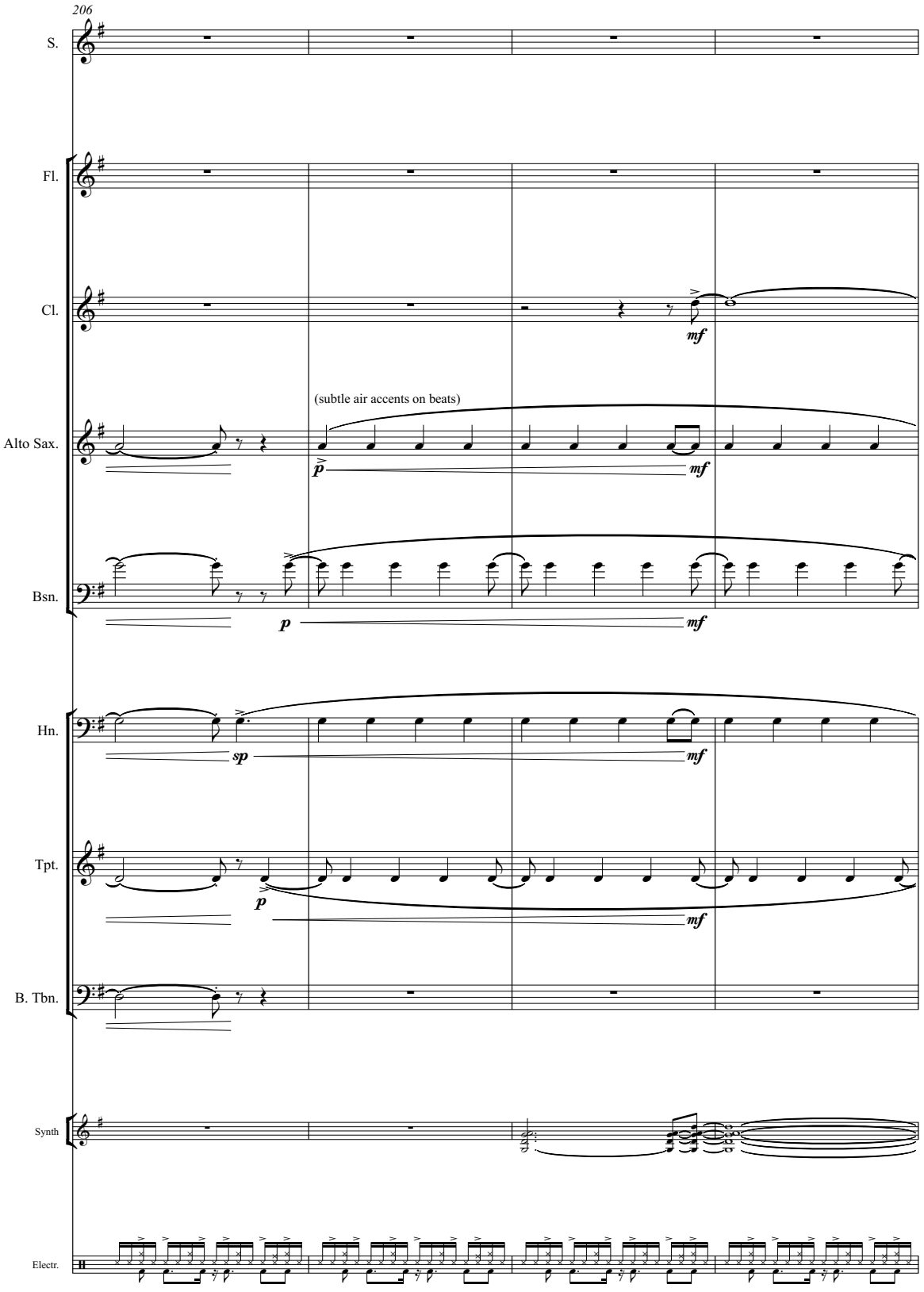

186
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.

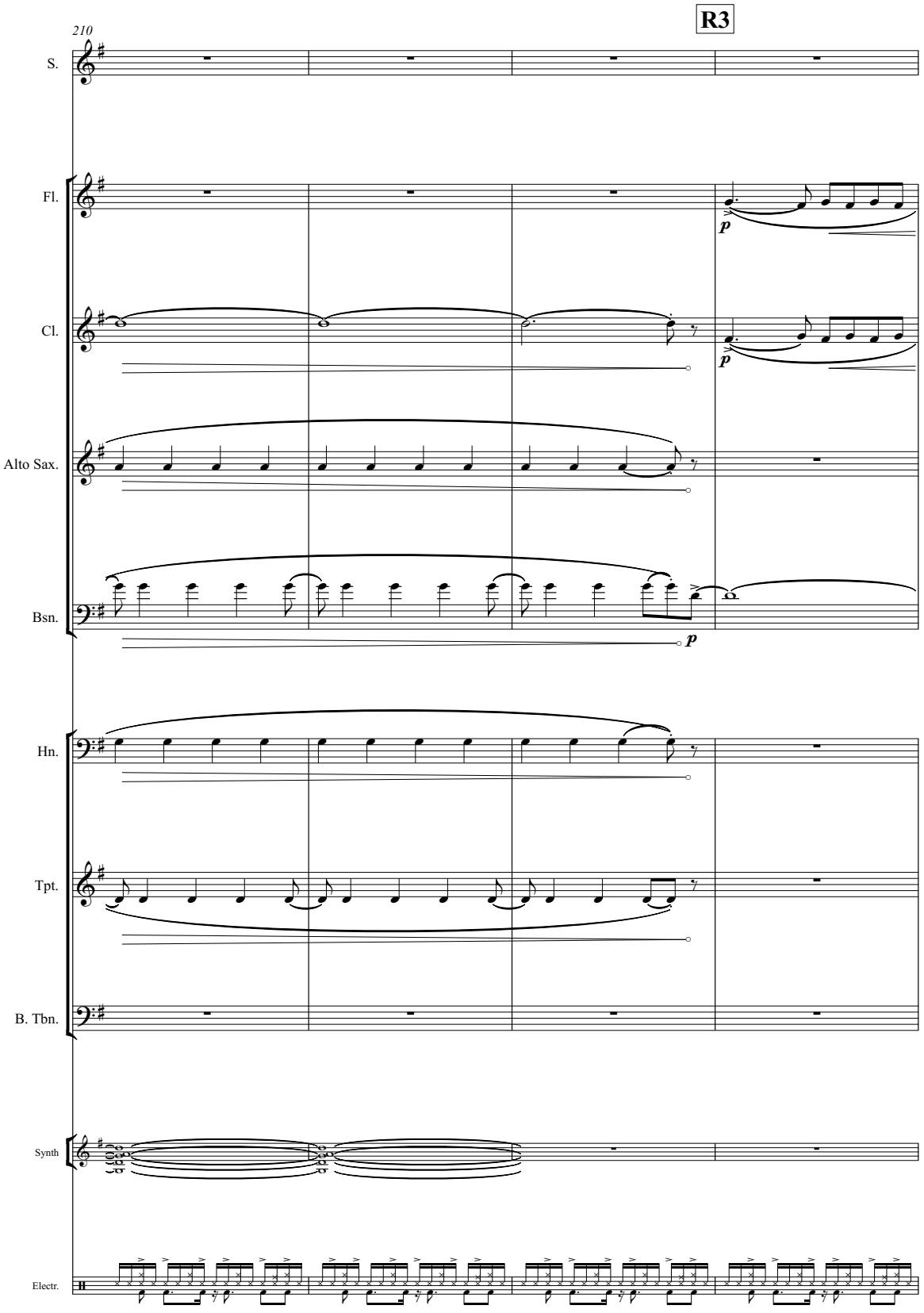

190
Q
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.

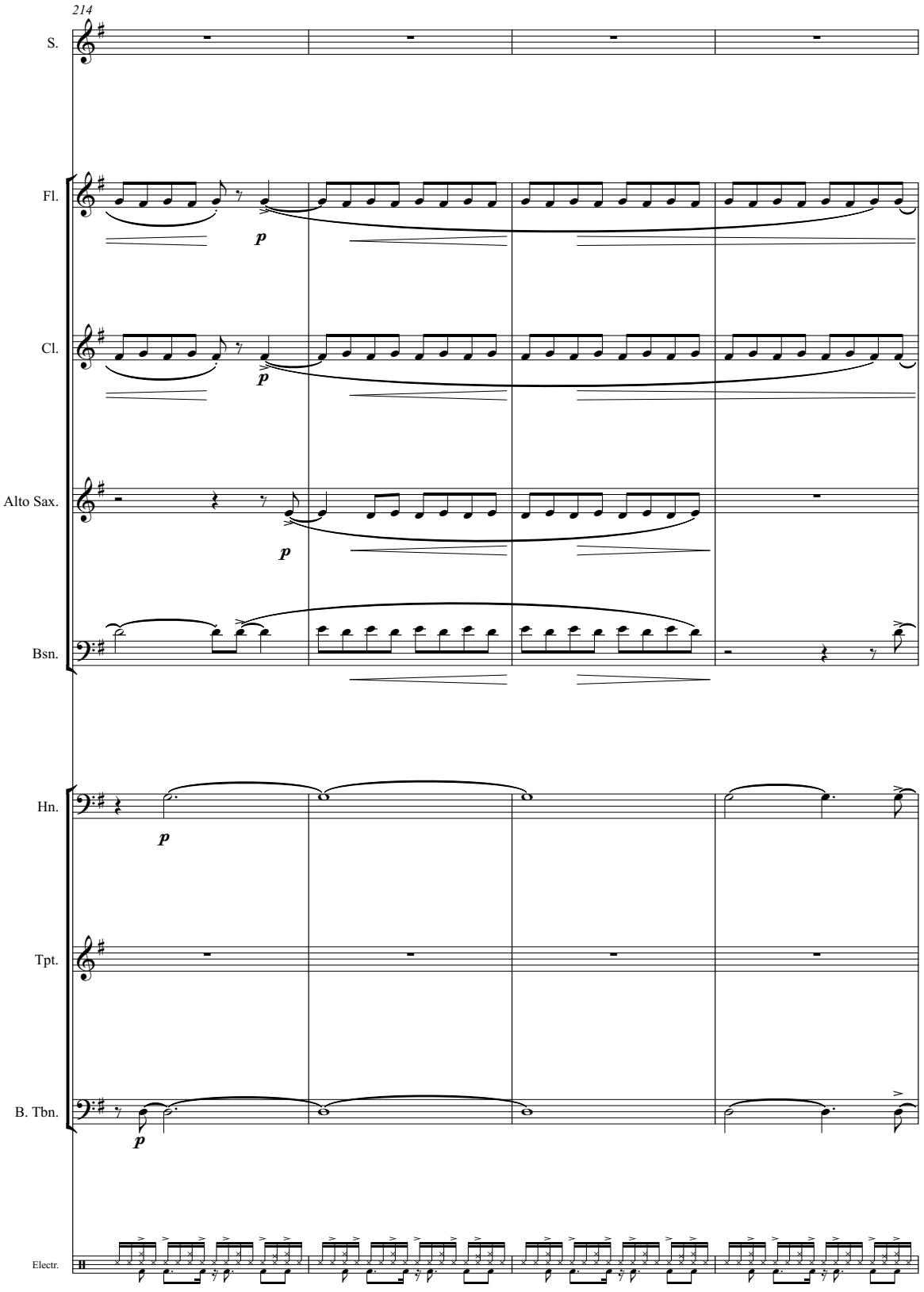

194
R1
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.

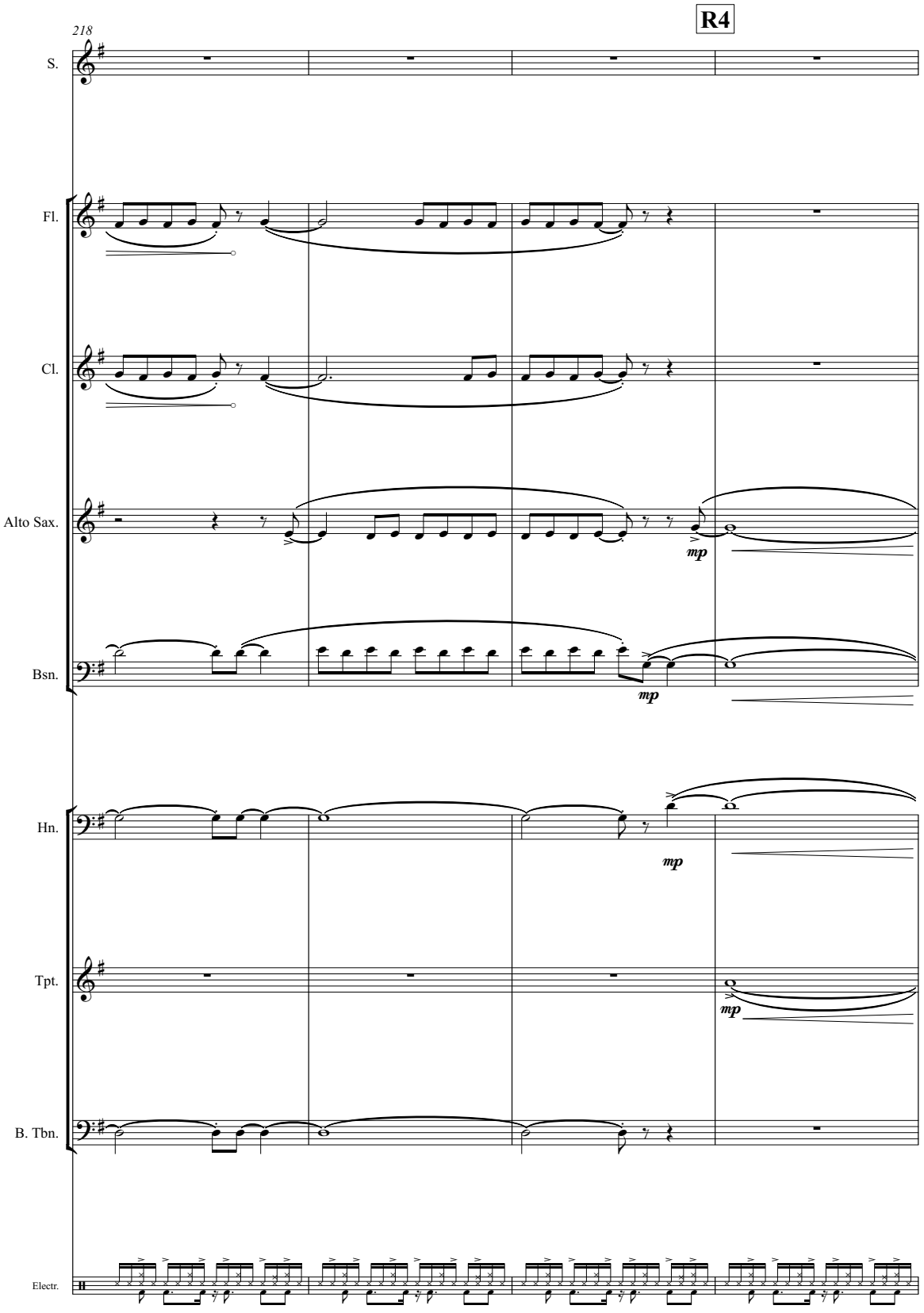

198
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Electr.
p
mf

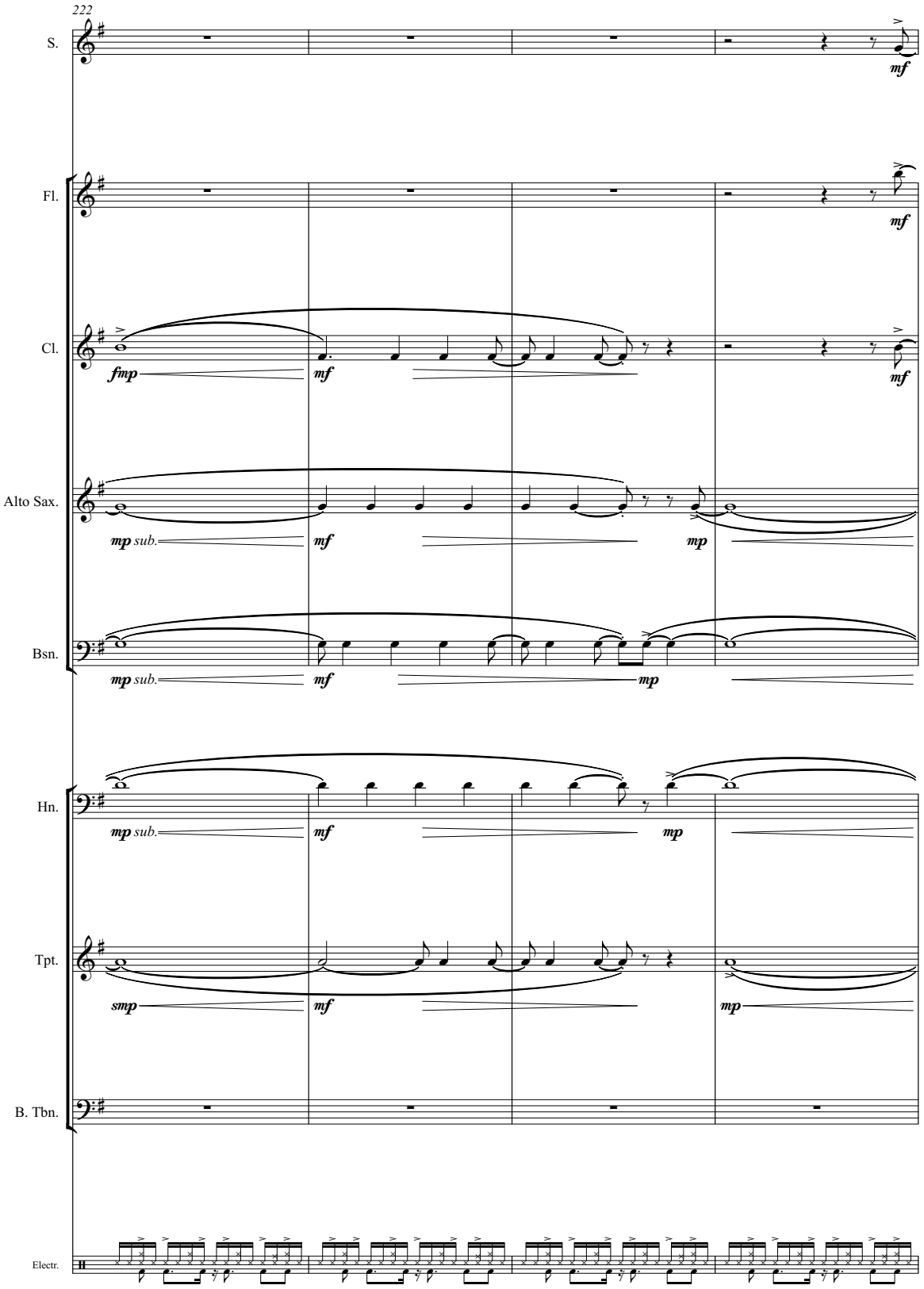

R2
202
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Electr.
mf
p
p
p
mp

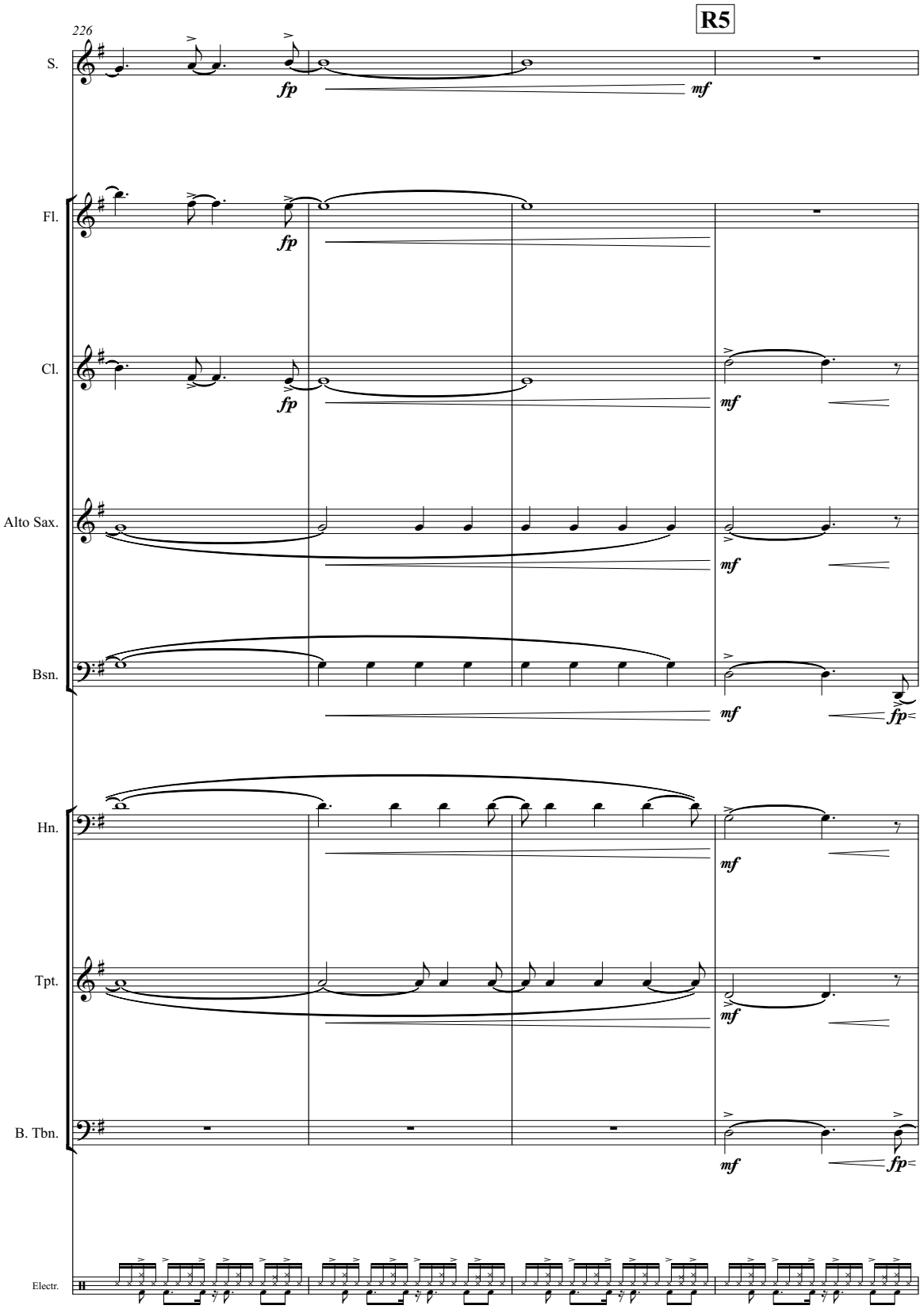

206
S.
Fl.
Cl.
mf
(subtle air accents on beats)
Alto Sax.
p
mf
Bsn.
p
mf
Hn.
sp
mf
Tpt.
p
mf
B. Tbn.
Synth
Electr.

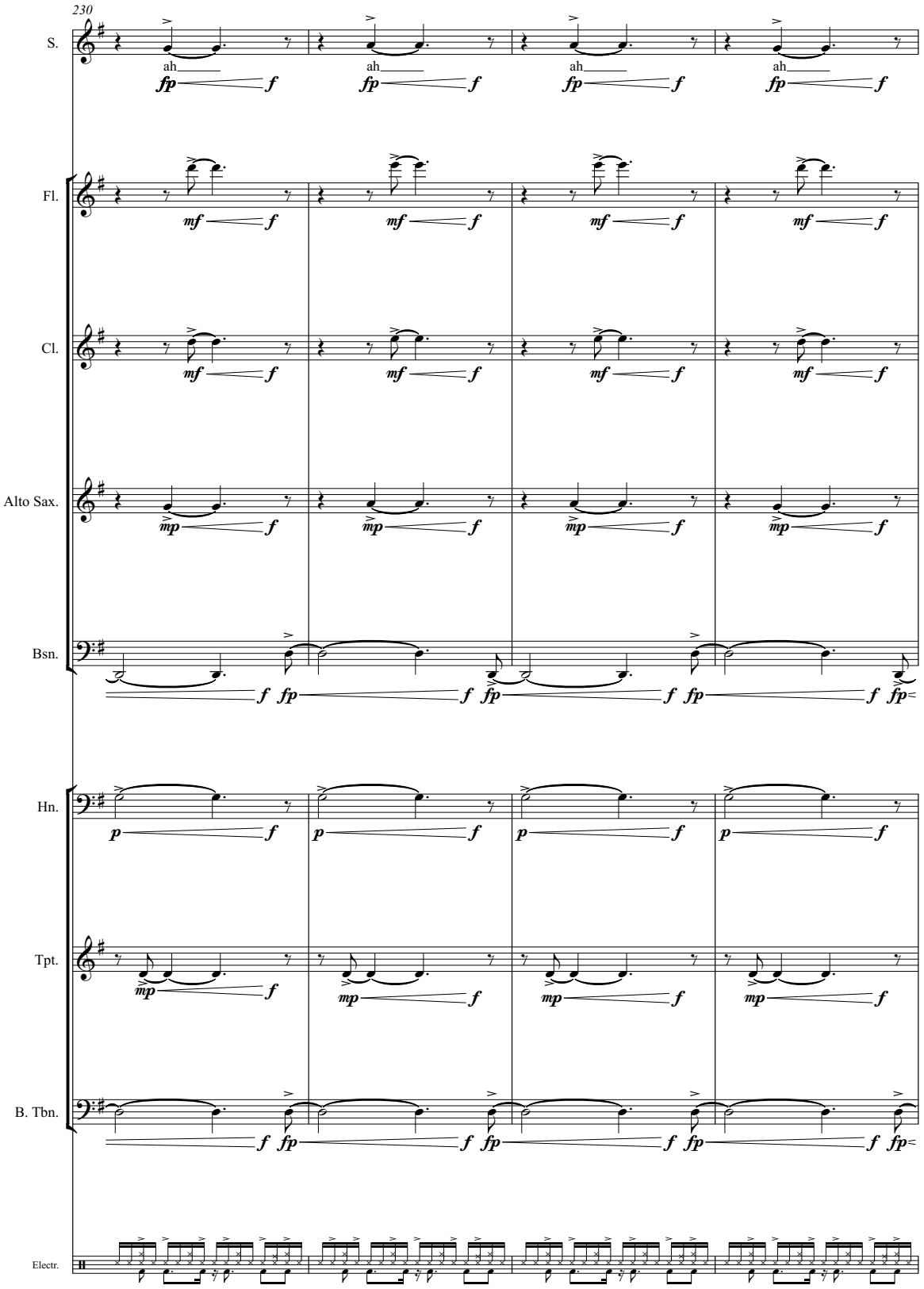

R3
210
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Synth
Electr.
p
p
p

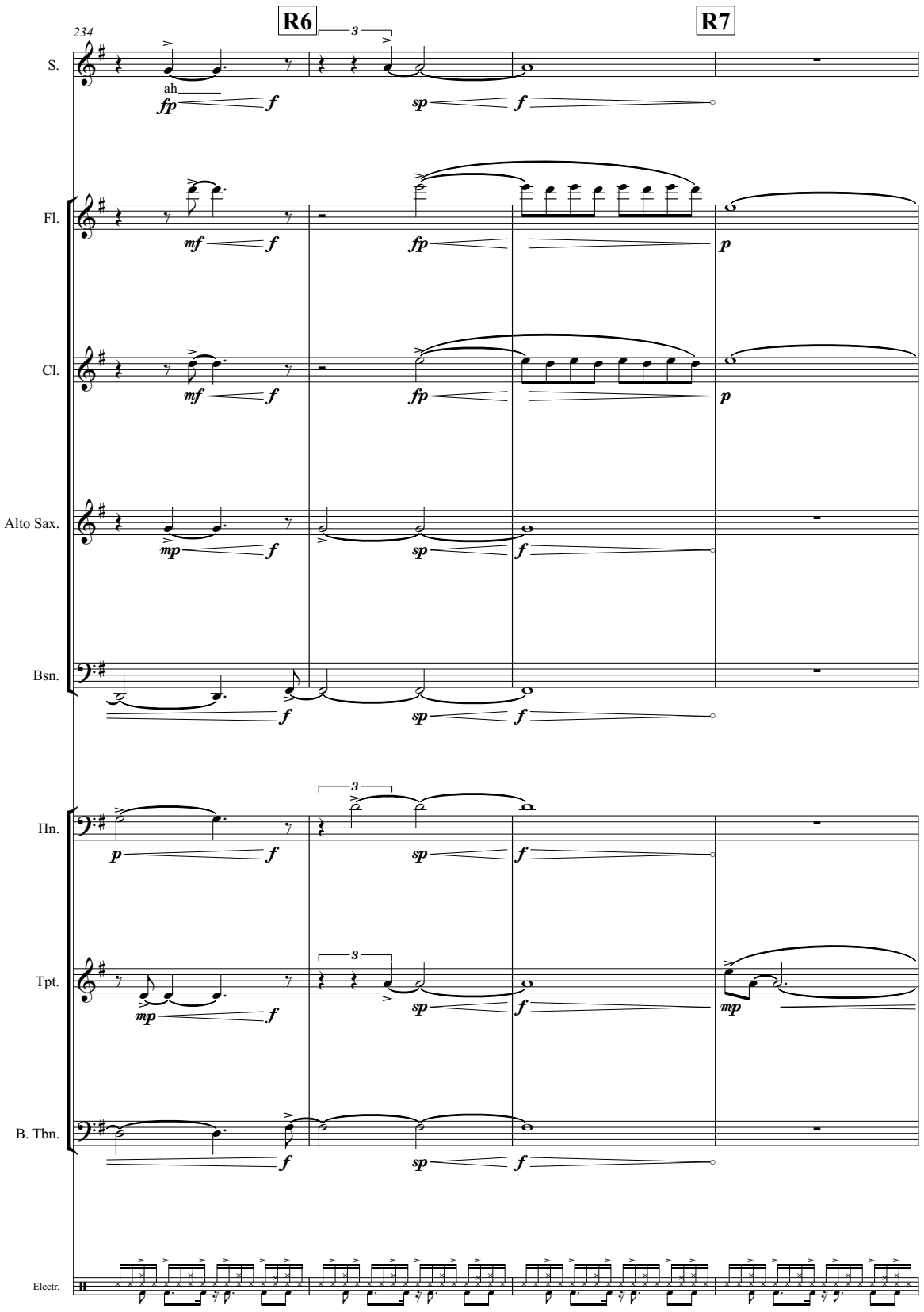

214
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Electr.
p

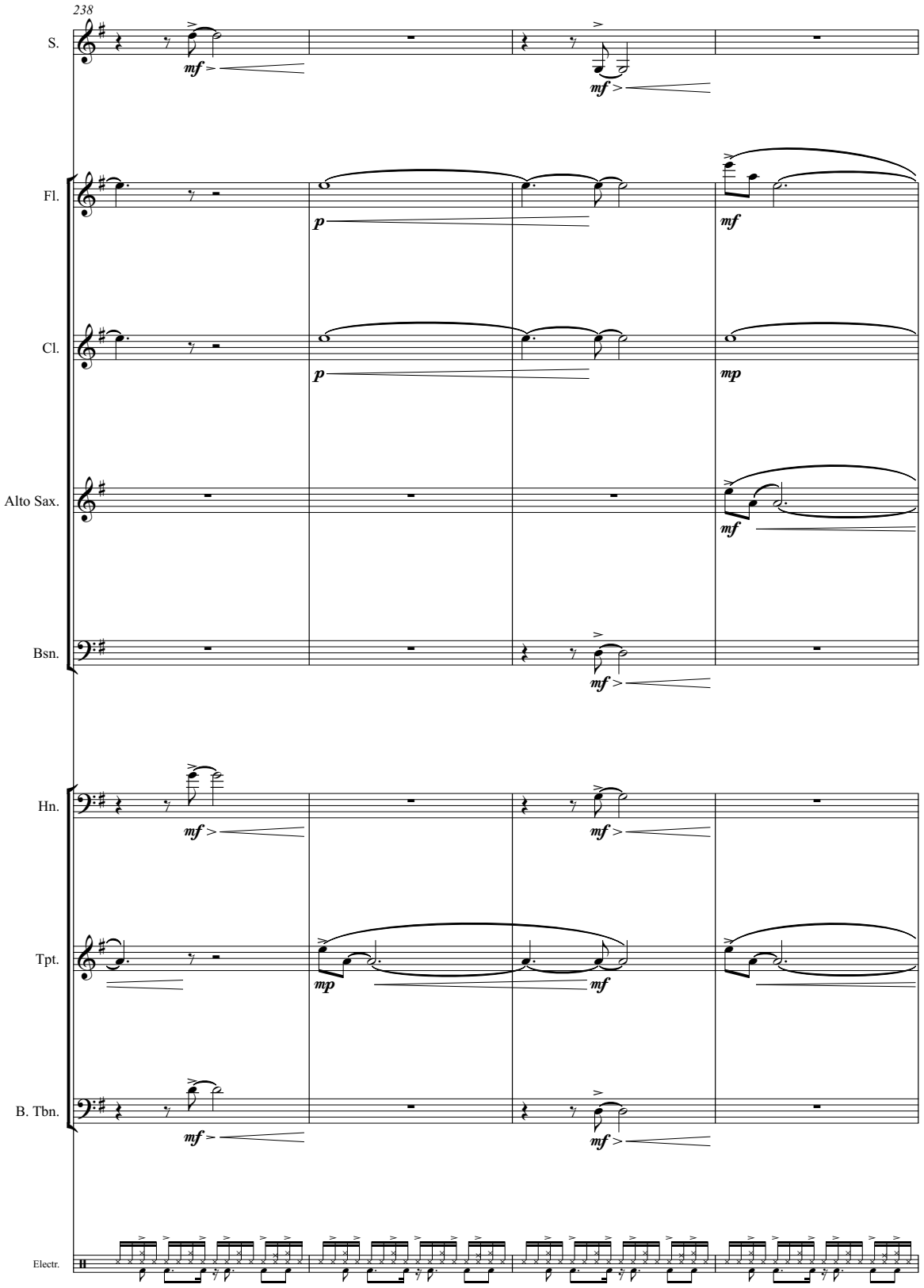

R4
218
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Electr.
mp
mp
mp

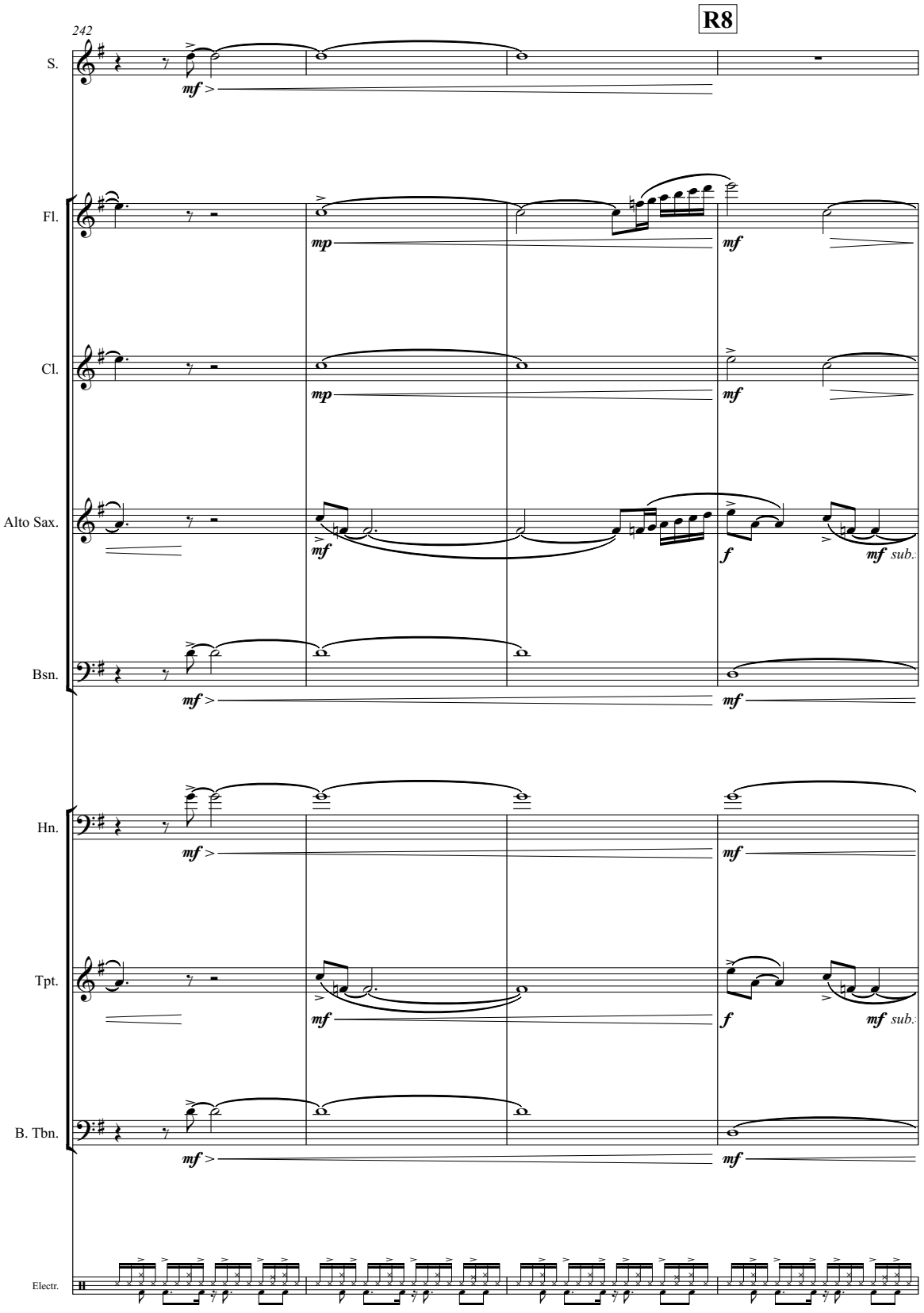

222
S.
mf
Fl.
mf
Cl.
fmp
mf
mf
Alto Sax.
mp sub.
mf
mp
Bsn.
mp sub.
mf
mp
Hn.
mp sub.
mf
mp
Tpt.
smp
mf
mp
B. Tbn.
Electr.

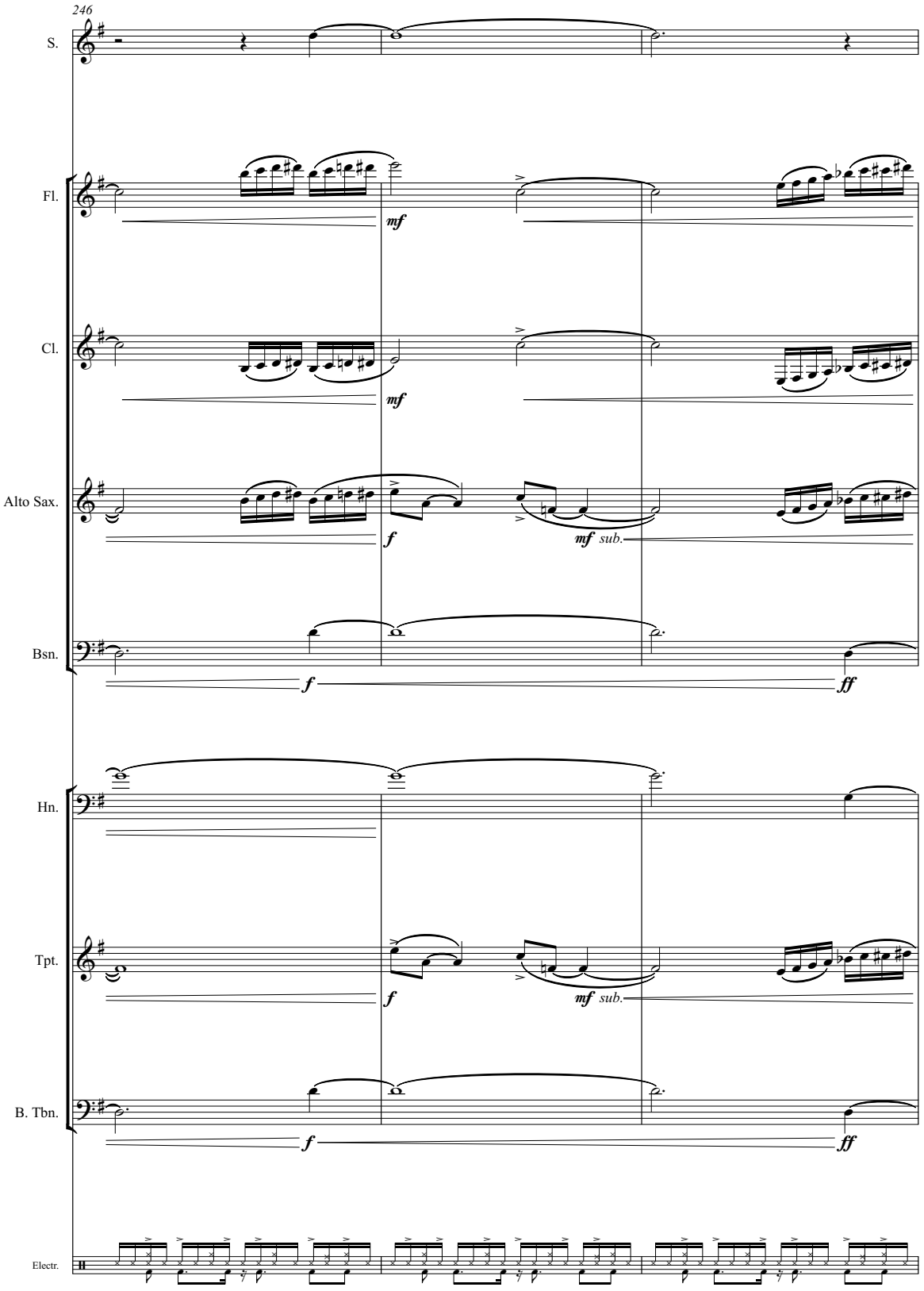

R5
226
S.
fp
mf
Fl.
fp
Cl.
fp
mf
Alto Sax.
mf
Bsn.
mf
fp
Hn.
mf
Tpt.
mf
B. Tbn.
mf
fp
Electr.

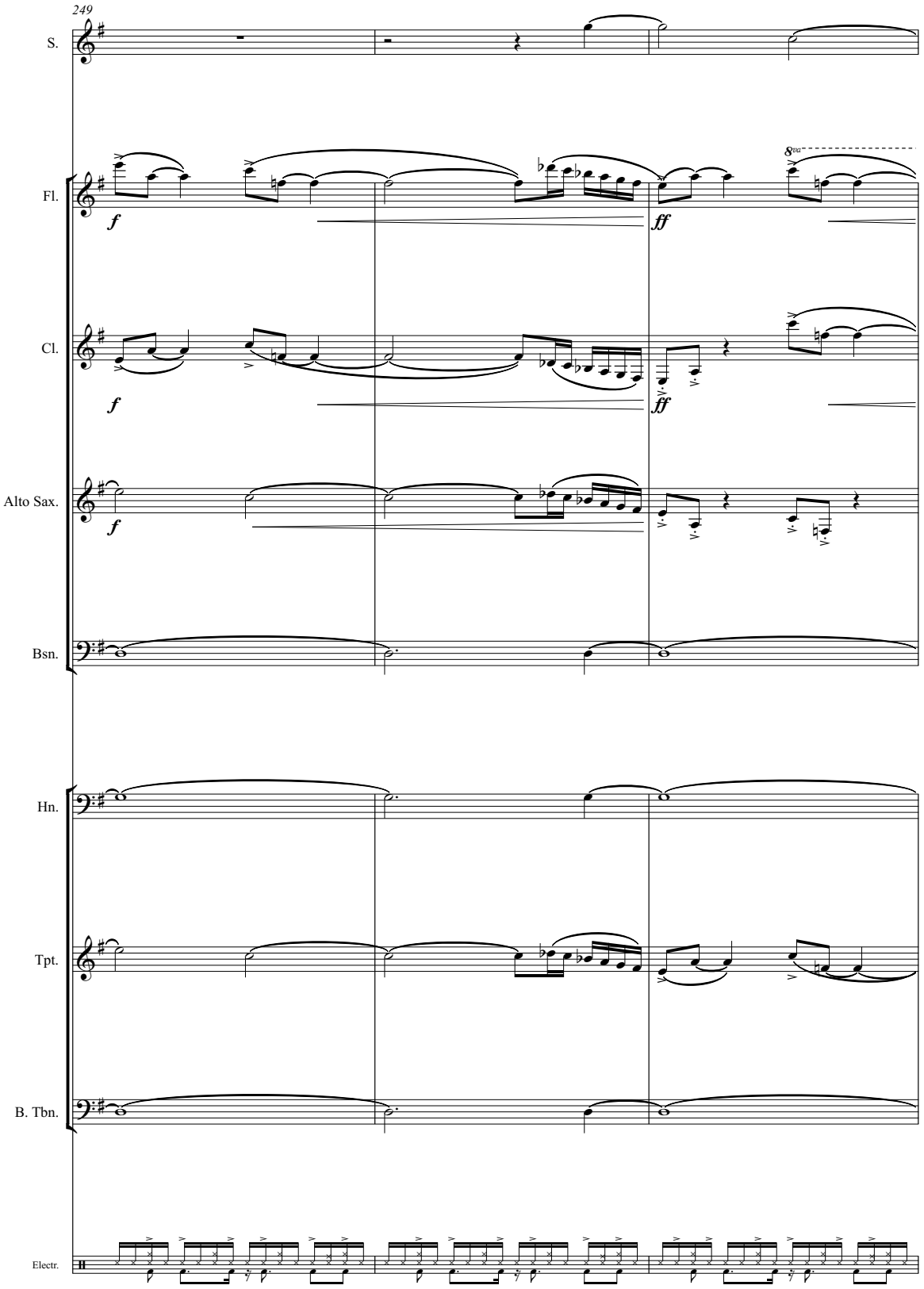

230
S.
ah
ah
ah
ah
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Electr.

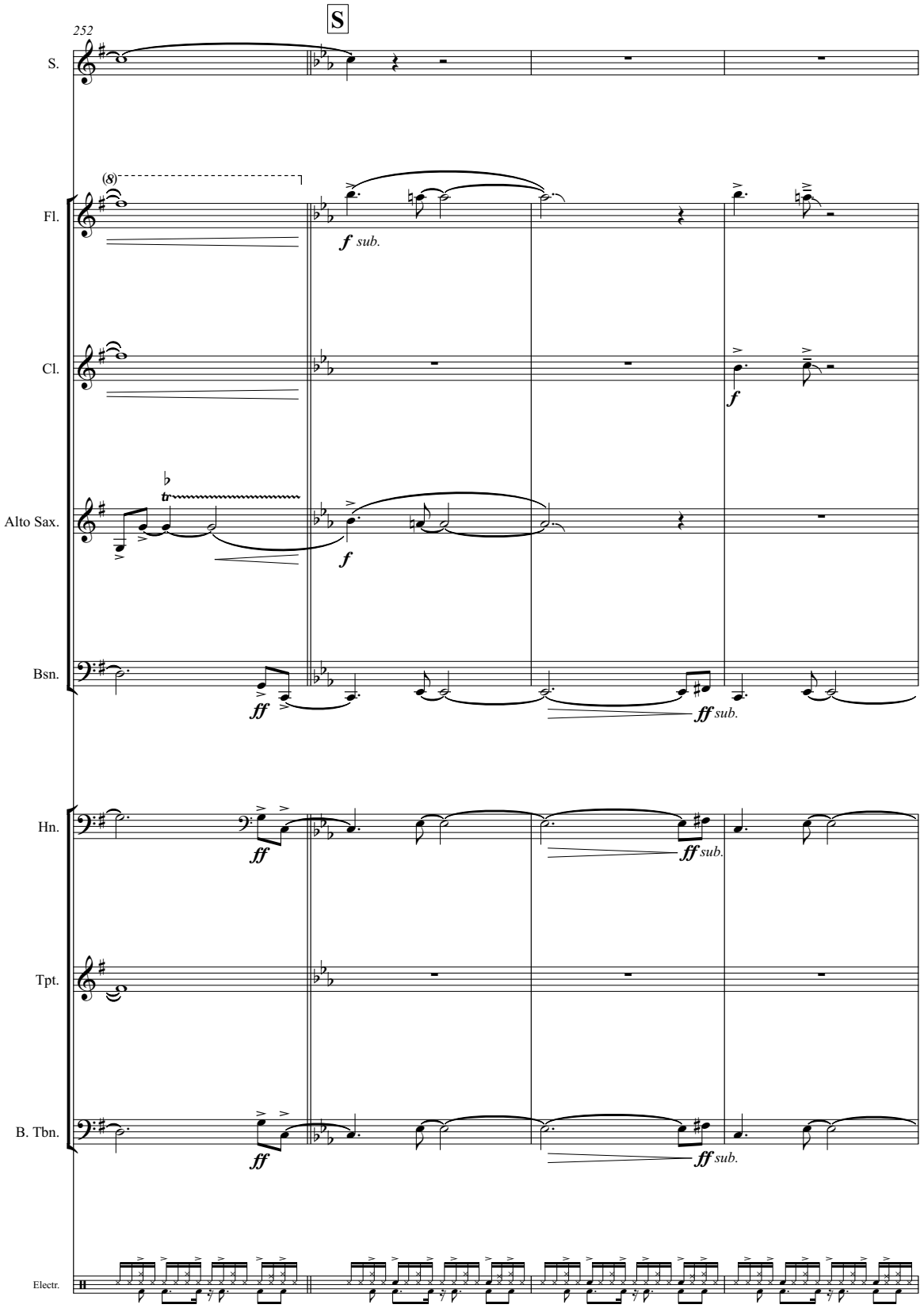

R6
R7
234
S.
ah
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Electr.

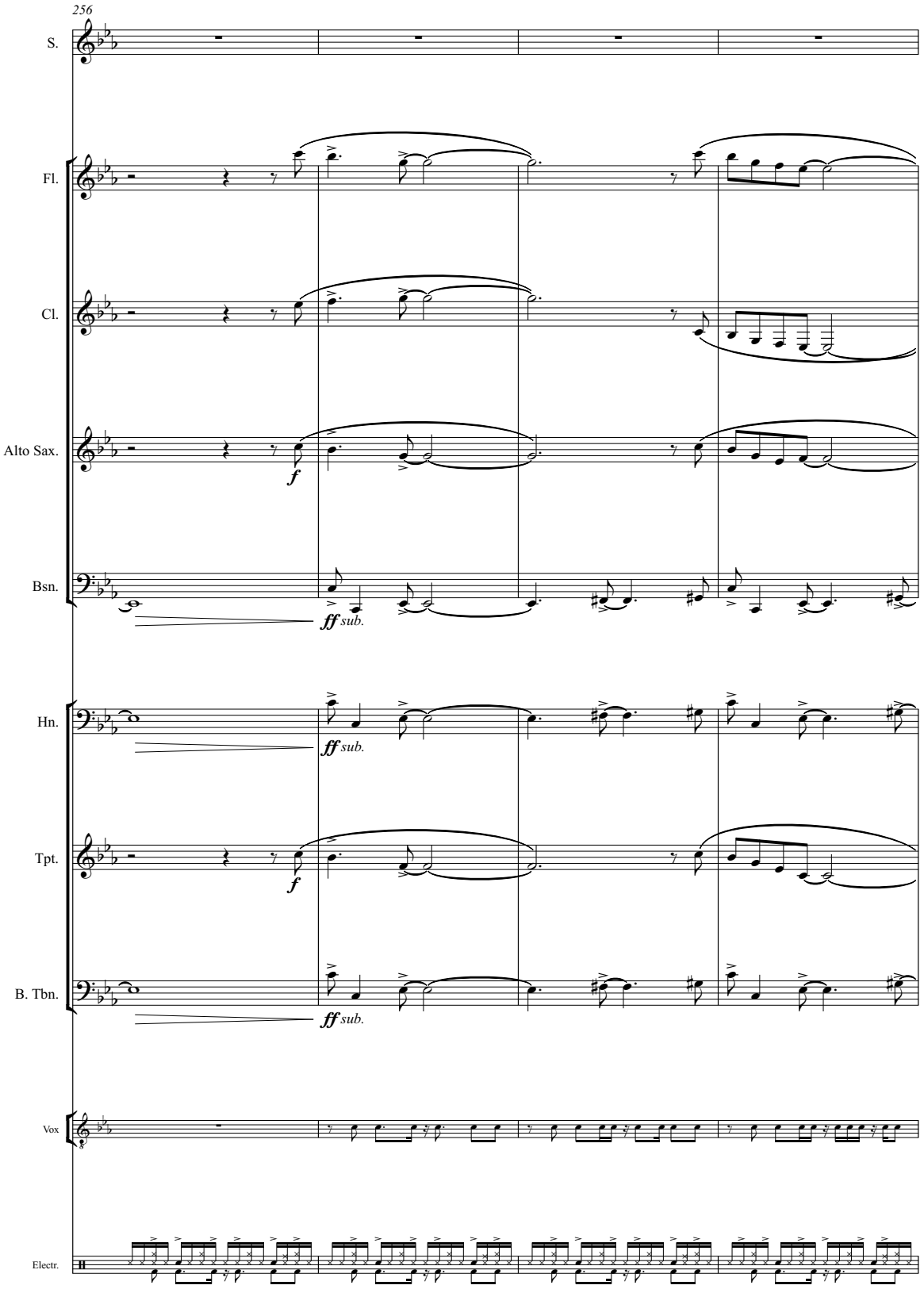

238
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Electr.

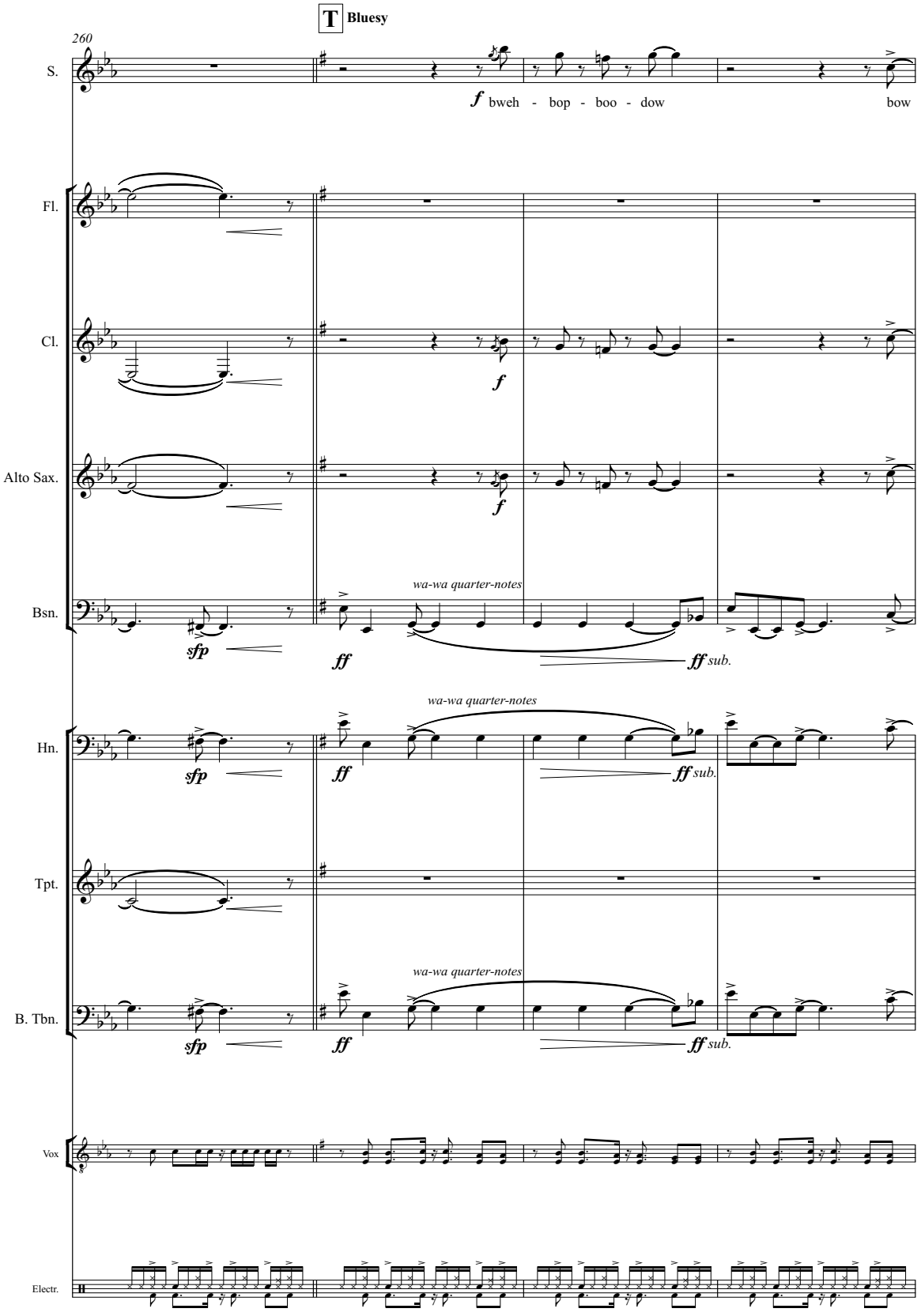

R8
242
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Electr.
mf
mp
f
sub.

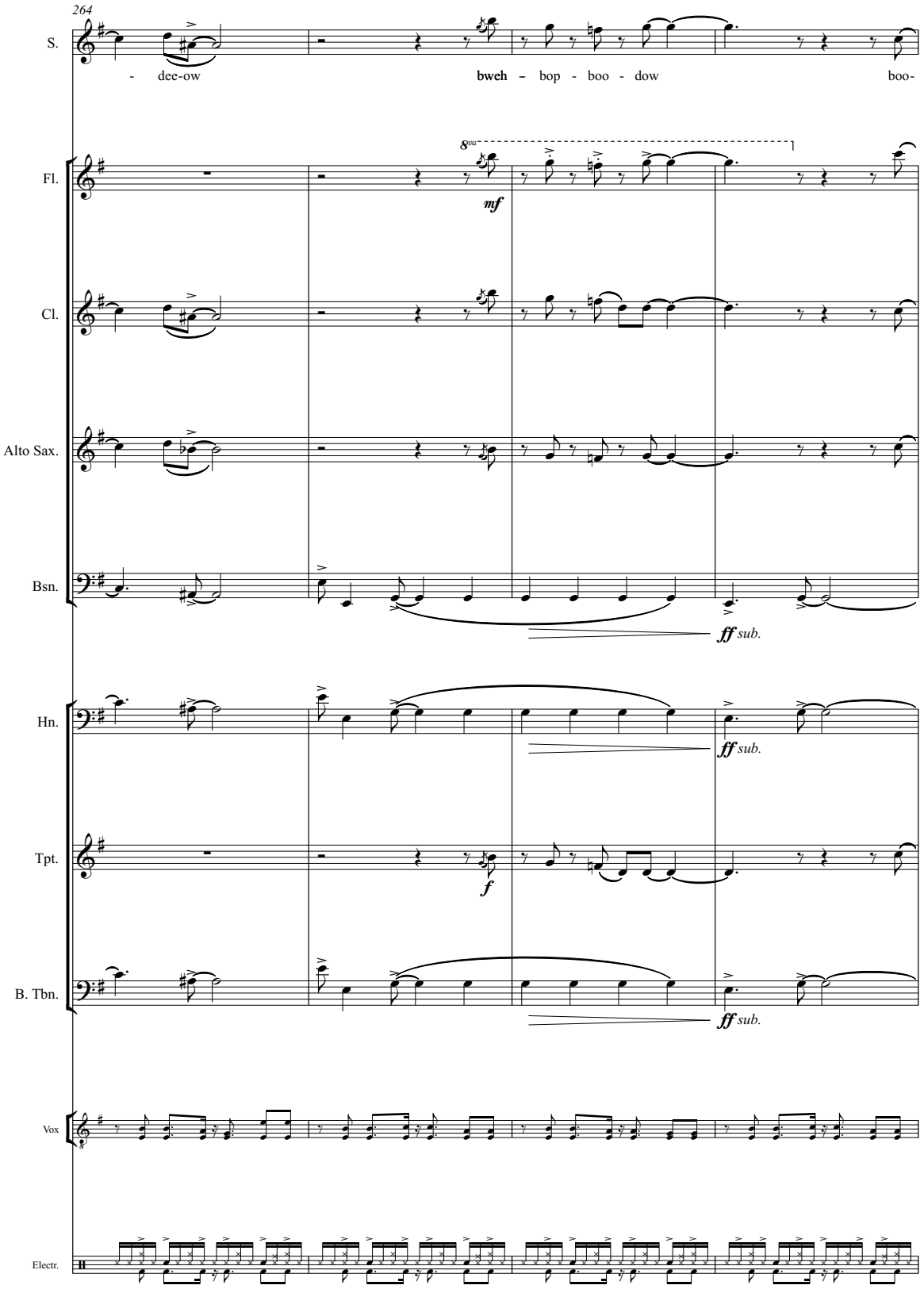

246
S.
Fl.
mf
Cl.
mf
Alto Sax.
f
mf sub.
Bsn.
f
ff
Hn.
Tpt.
f
mf sub.
B. Tbn.
f
ff
Electr.

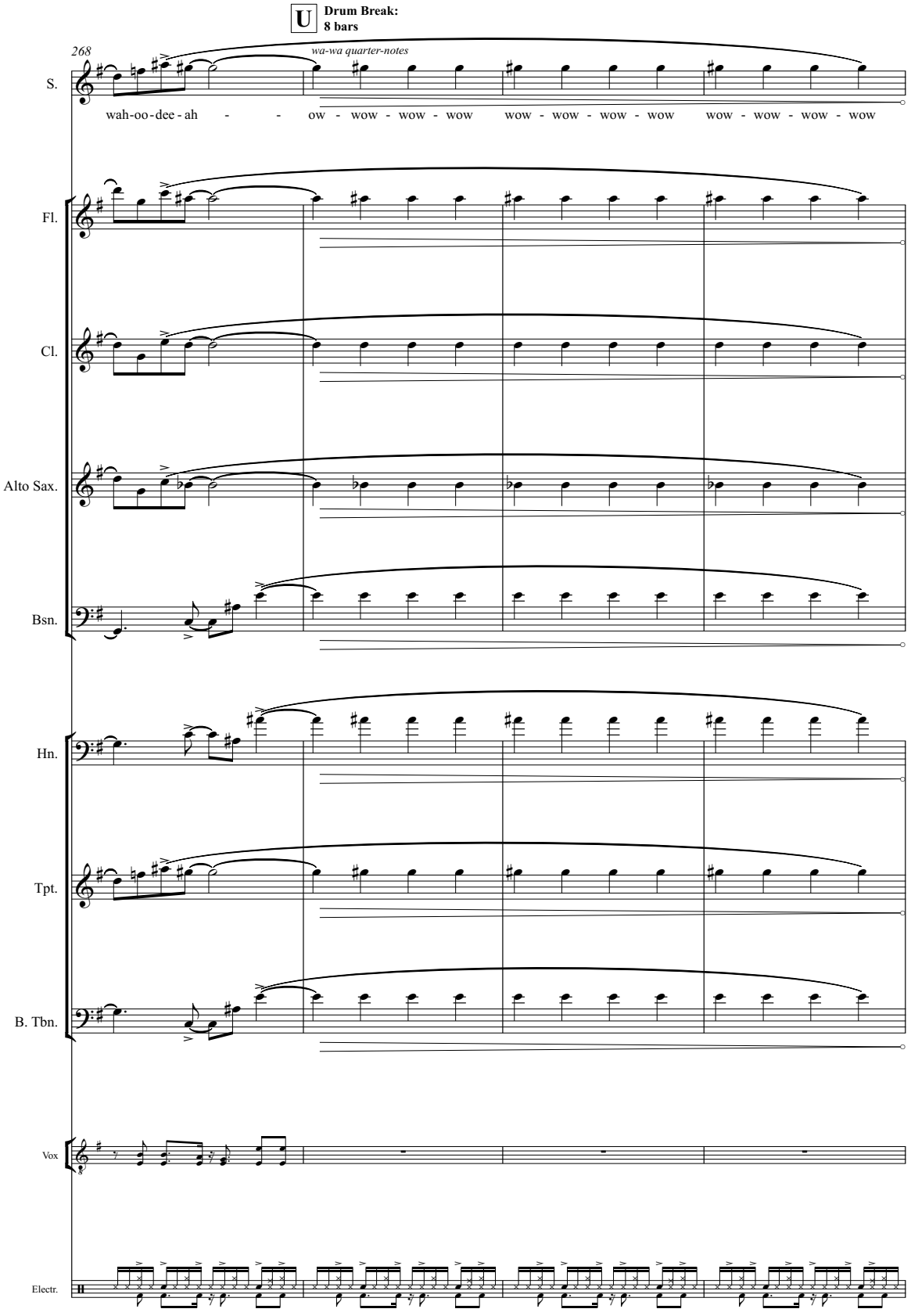

249
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Electr.
f
ff
8va

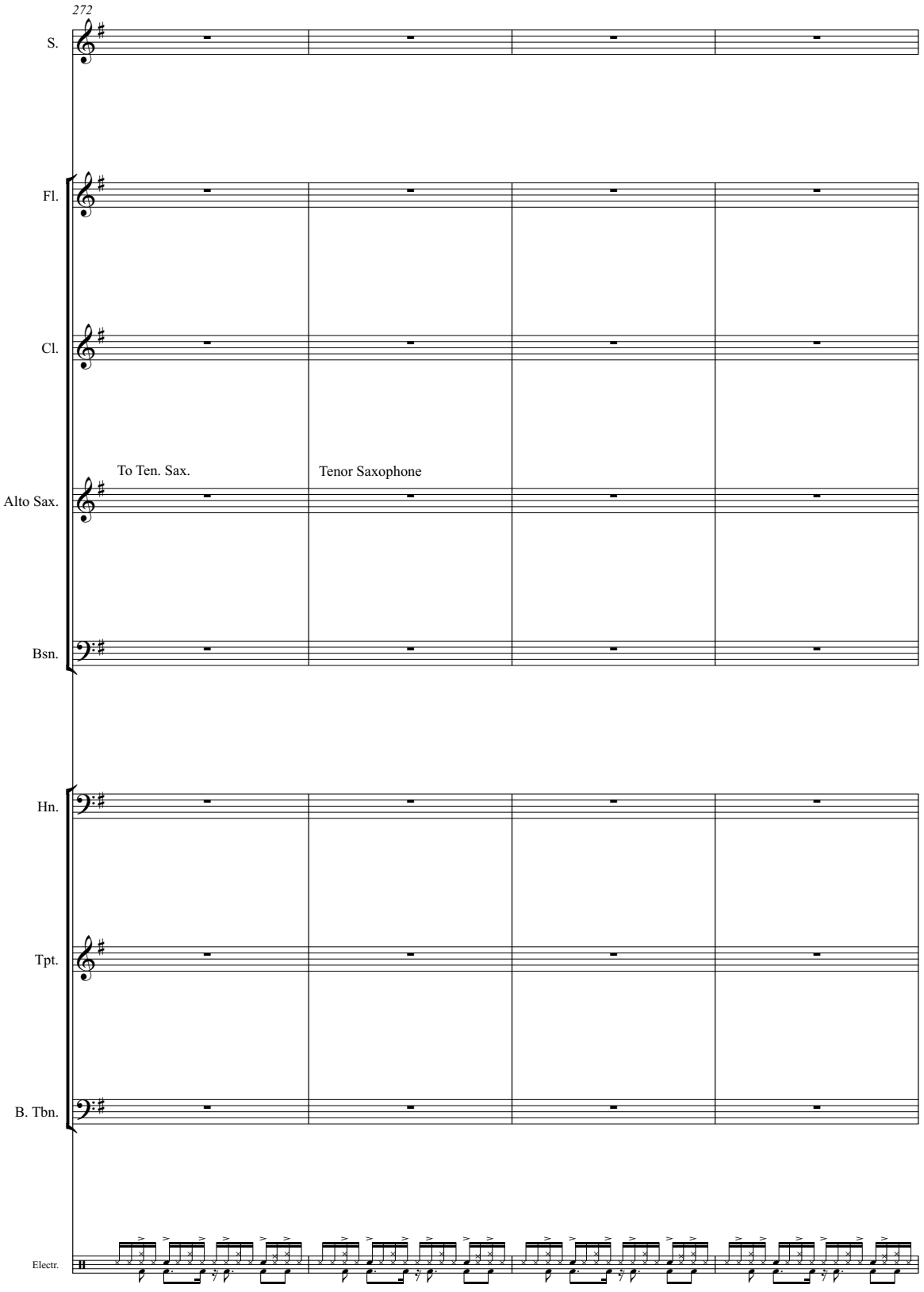

S
252
S.
(8)
Fl.
f sub.
Cl.
f
Alto Sax.
tr
f
Bsn.
ff
ff sub.
Hn.
ff
ff sub.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
ff
ff sub.
Electr.

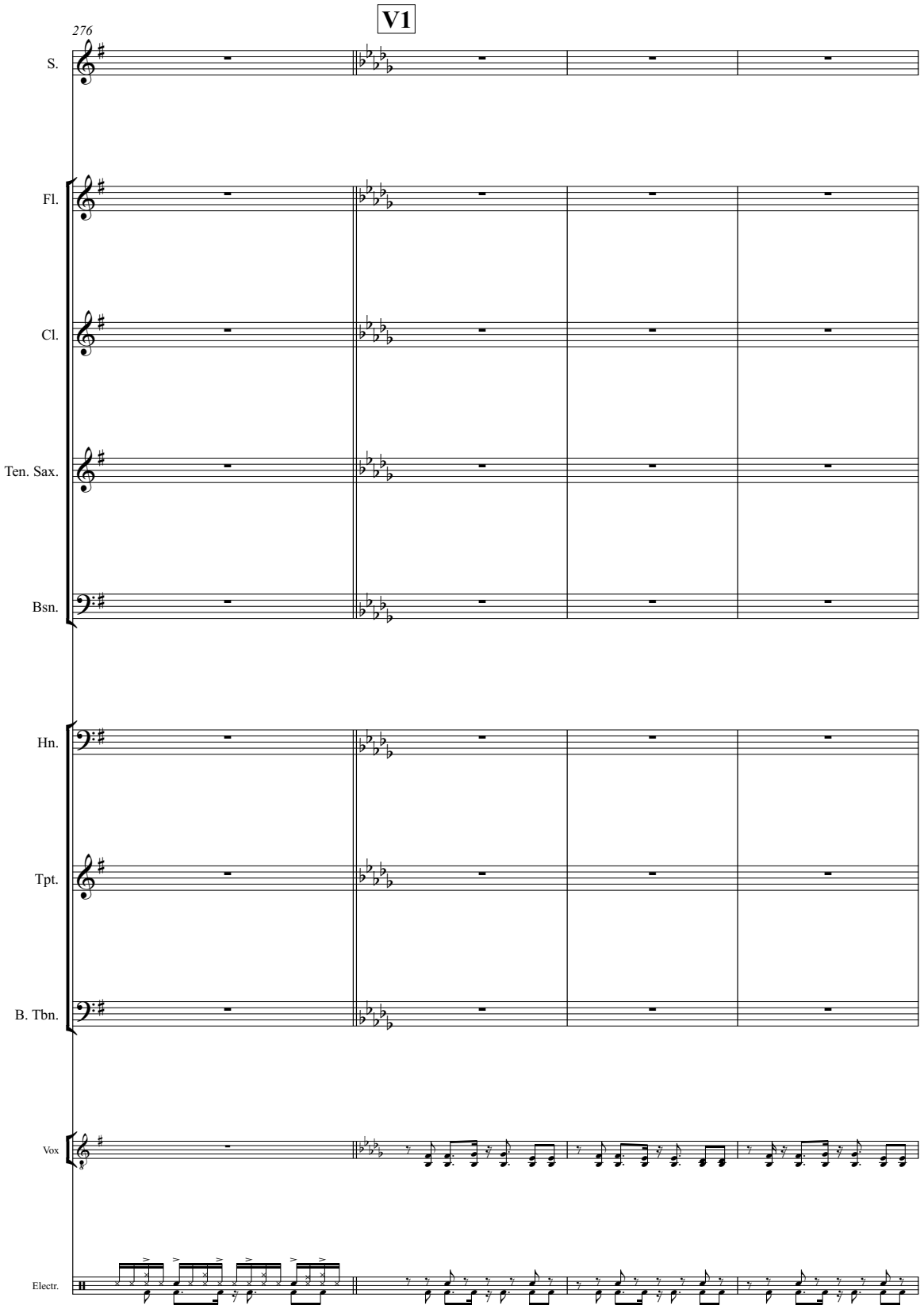

256
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.
f
ff sub.

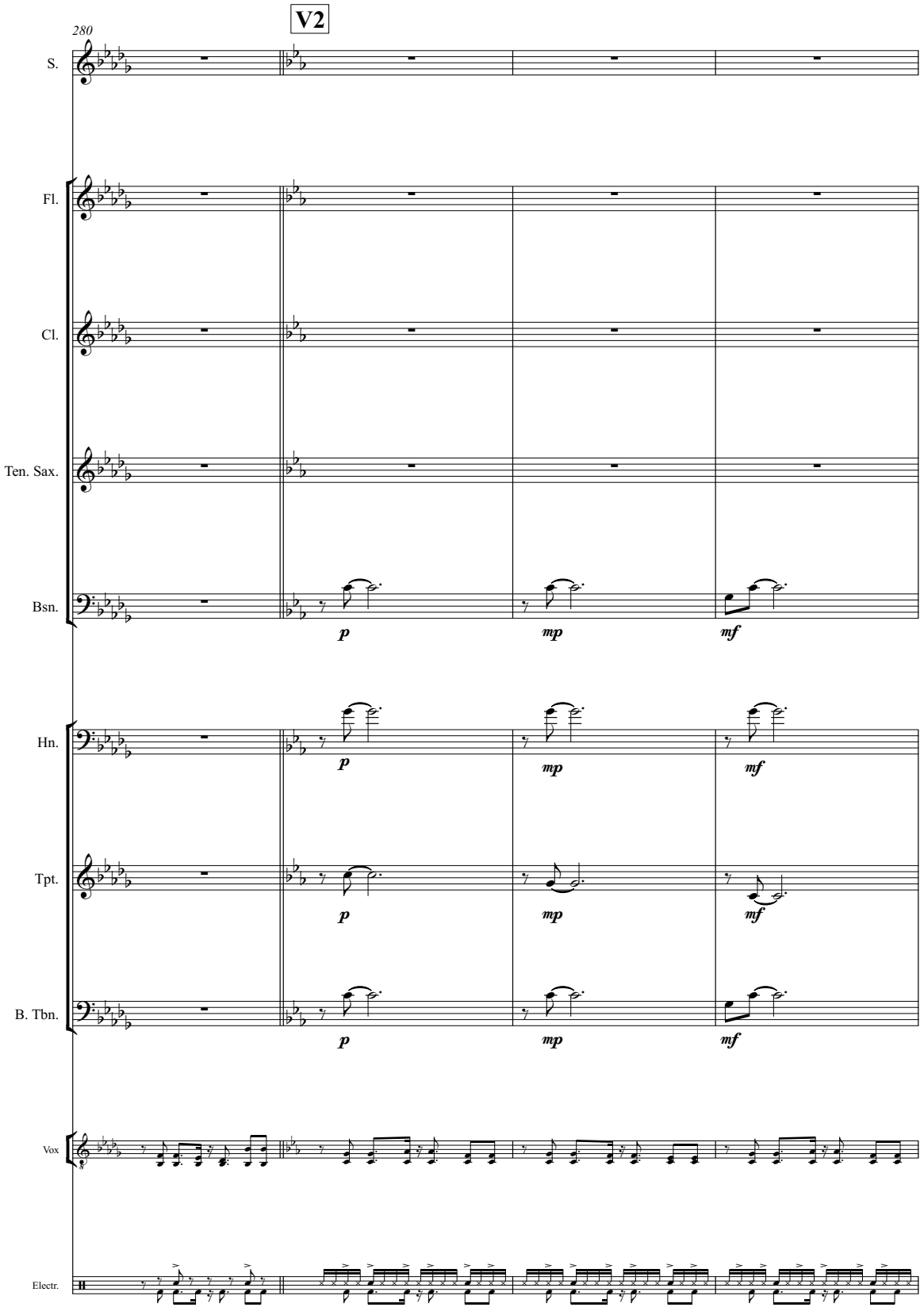

T Bluesy
260
S.
f bweh - bop - boo - dow
bow
Fl.
Cl.
f
Alto Sax.
f
wa-wa quarter-notes
Bsn.
sfp
ff
ff sub.
wa-wa quarter-notes
Hn.
sfp
ff
ff sub.
Tpt.
wa-wa quarter-notes
B. Tbn.
sfp
ff
ff sub.
Vox
Electr.

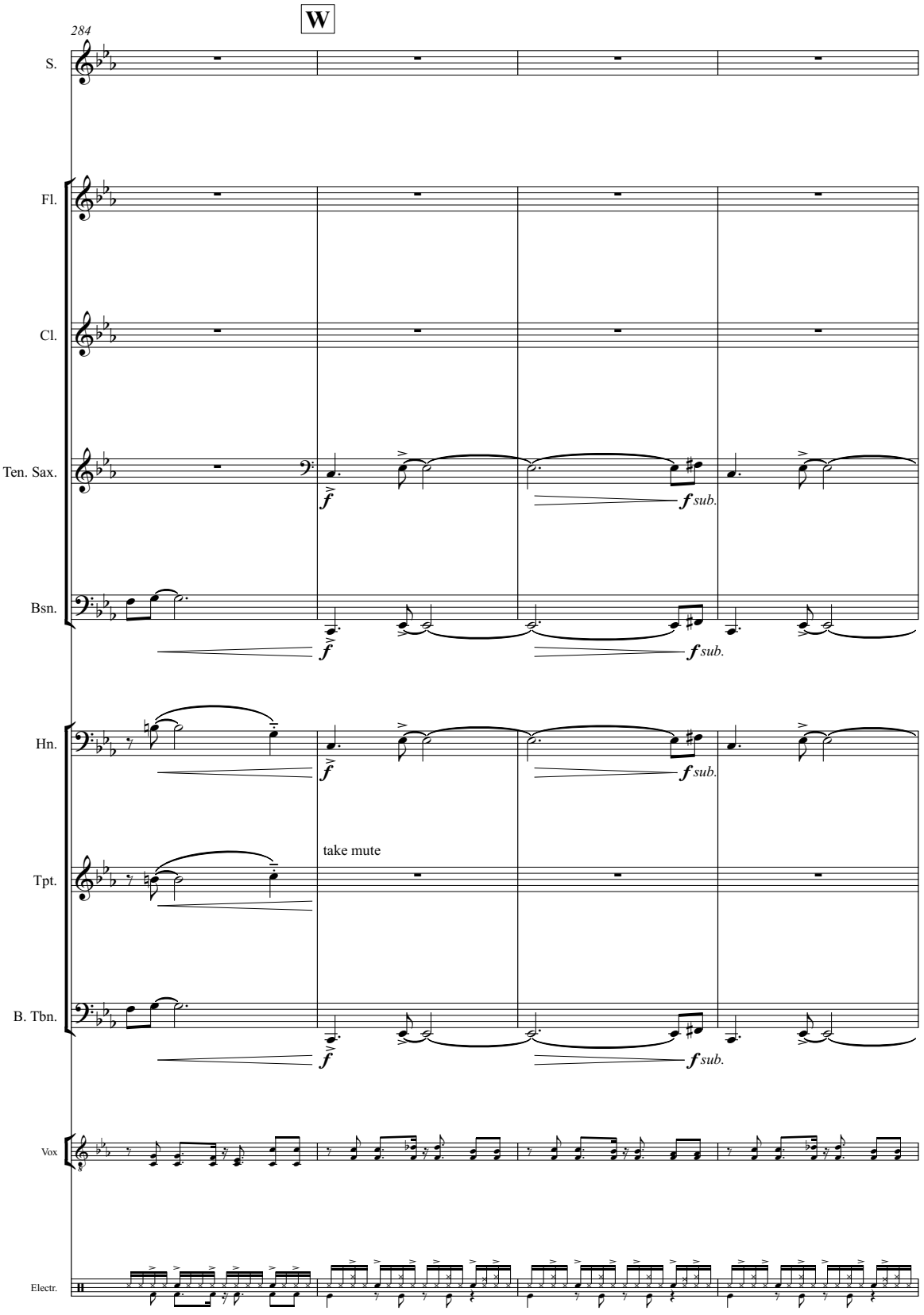

264
S.
- dee-ow
bweh - bop - boo - dow
boo-
8va
Fl.
mf
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
ff sub.
Hn.
ff sub.
Tpt.
f
B. Tbn.
ff sub.
Vox
Electr.

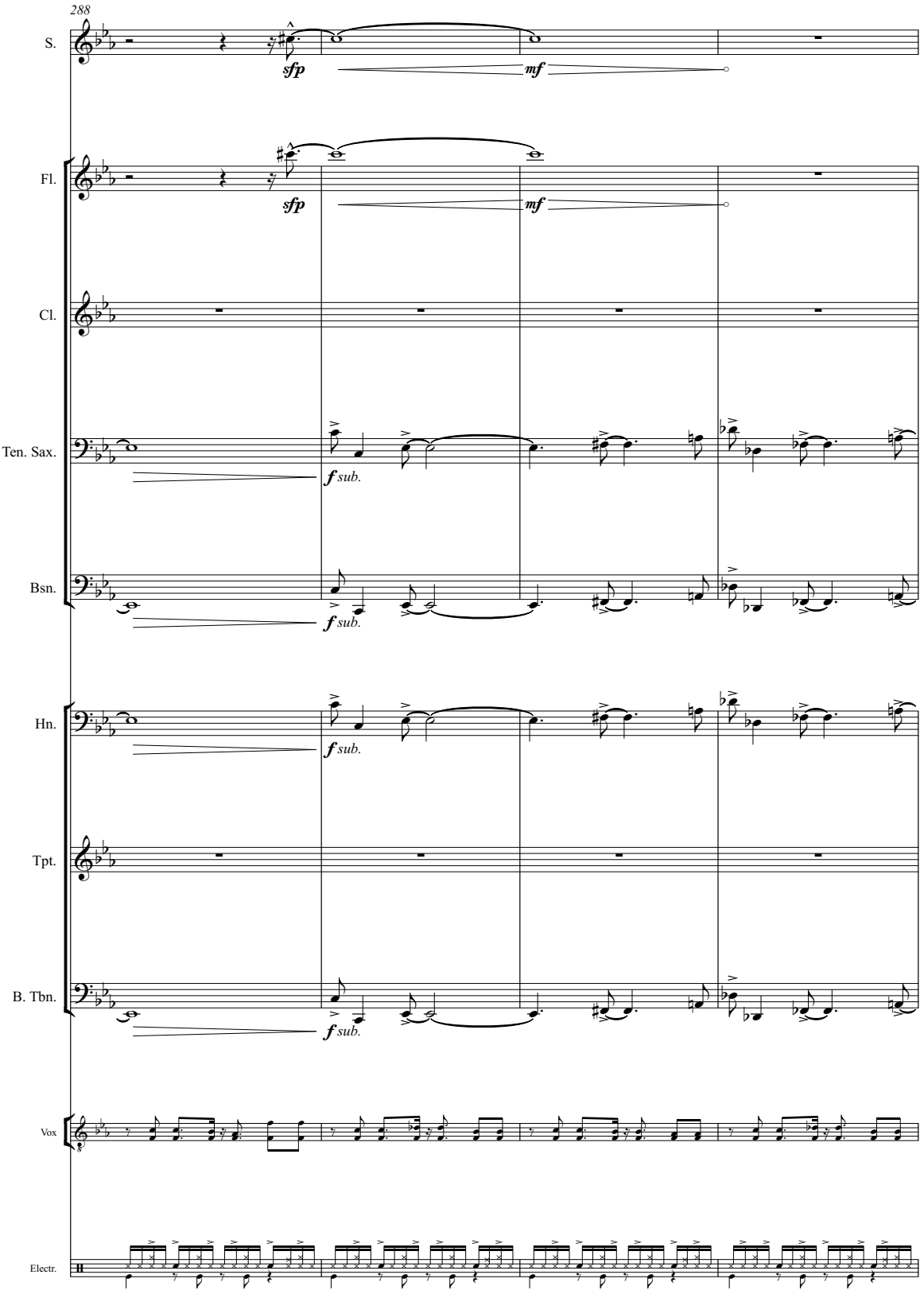

U
Drum Break:
8 bars
268
wa-wa quarter-notes
S.
wah-oo-dee-ah - - ow - wow - wow - wow wow - wow - wow - wow wow - wow - wow - wow
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.

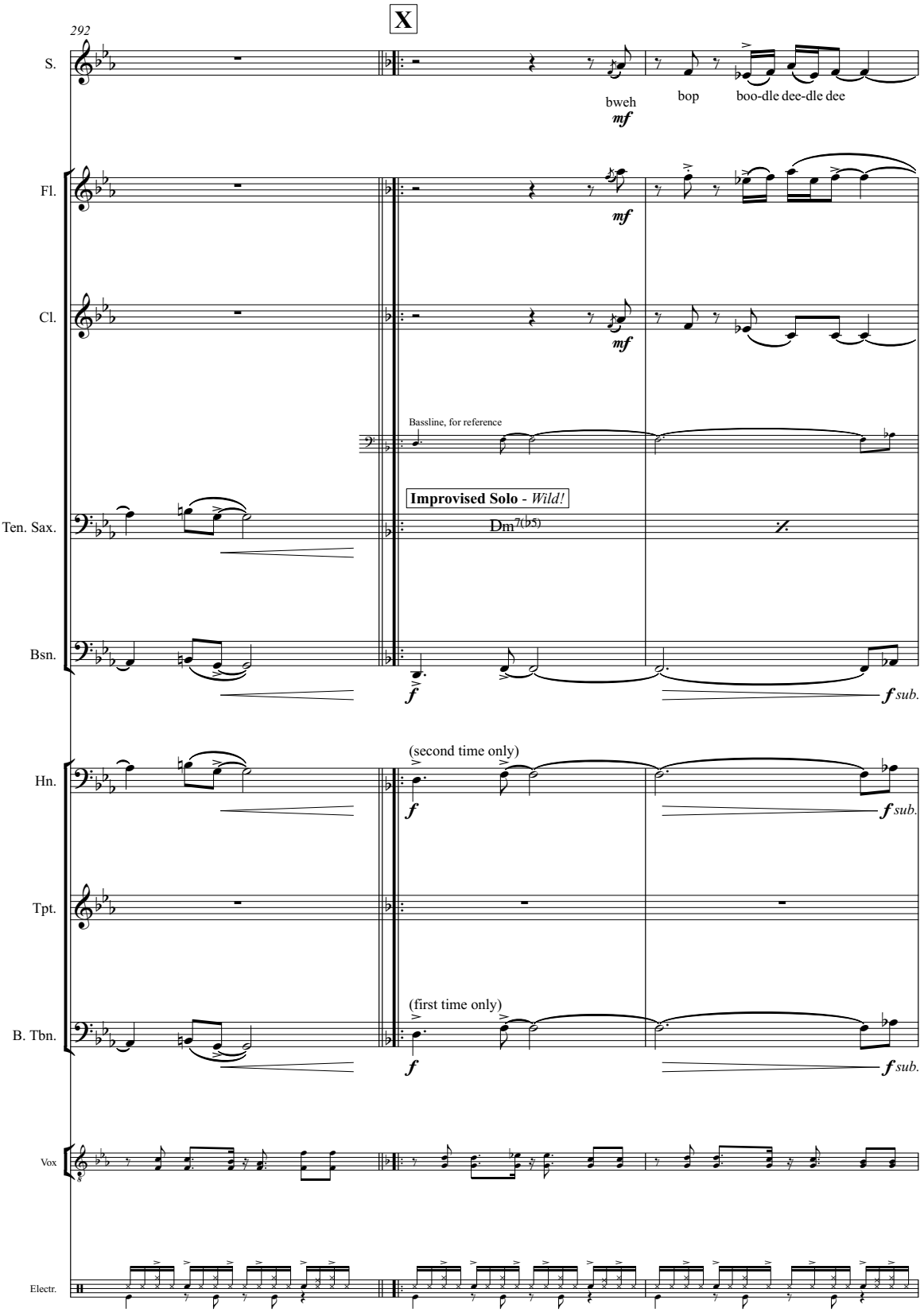

272
S.
Fl.
Cl.
To Ten. Sax.
Tenor Saxophone
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Electr.

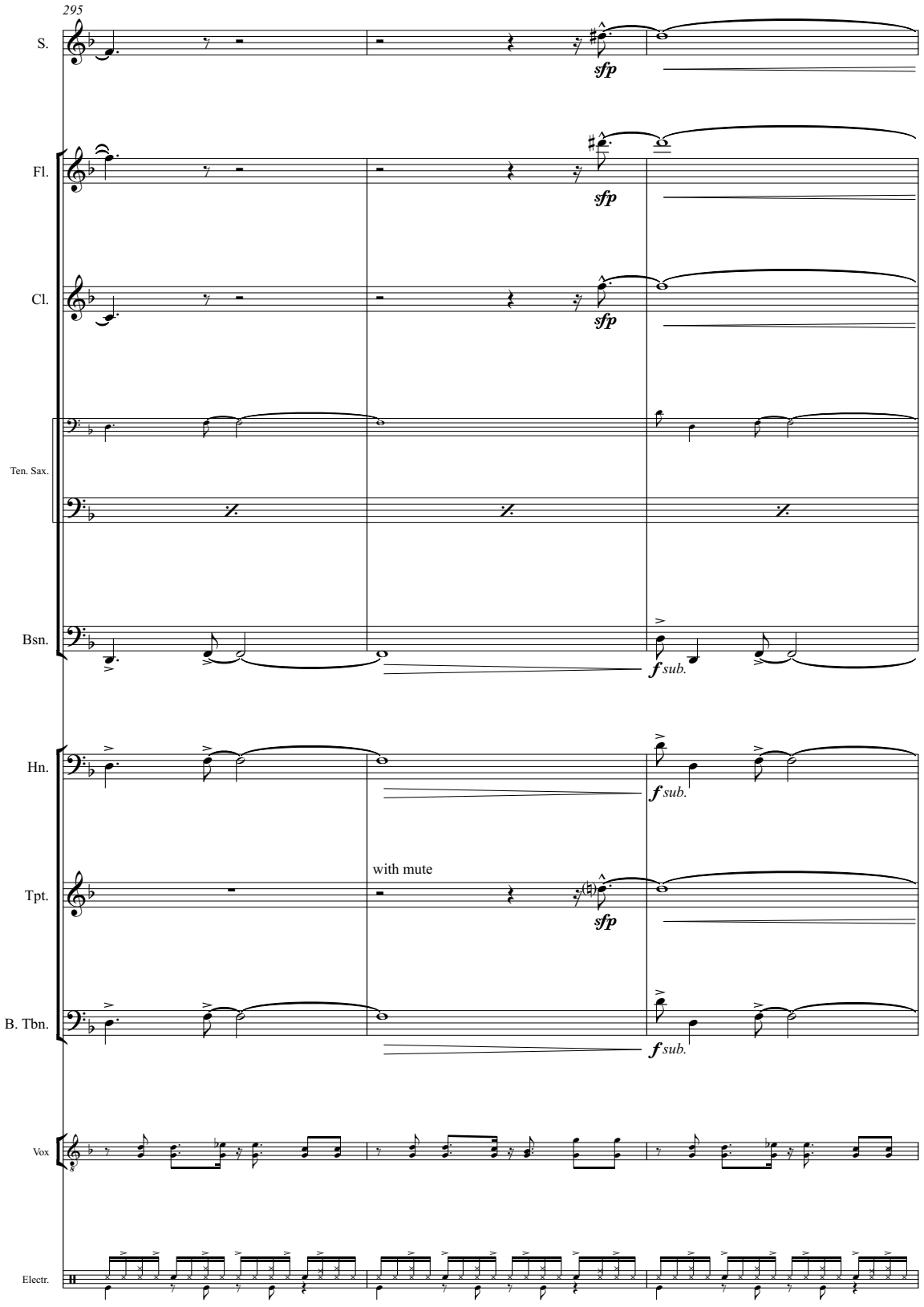

V1
276
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.

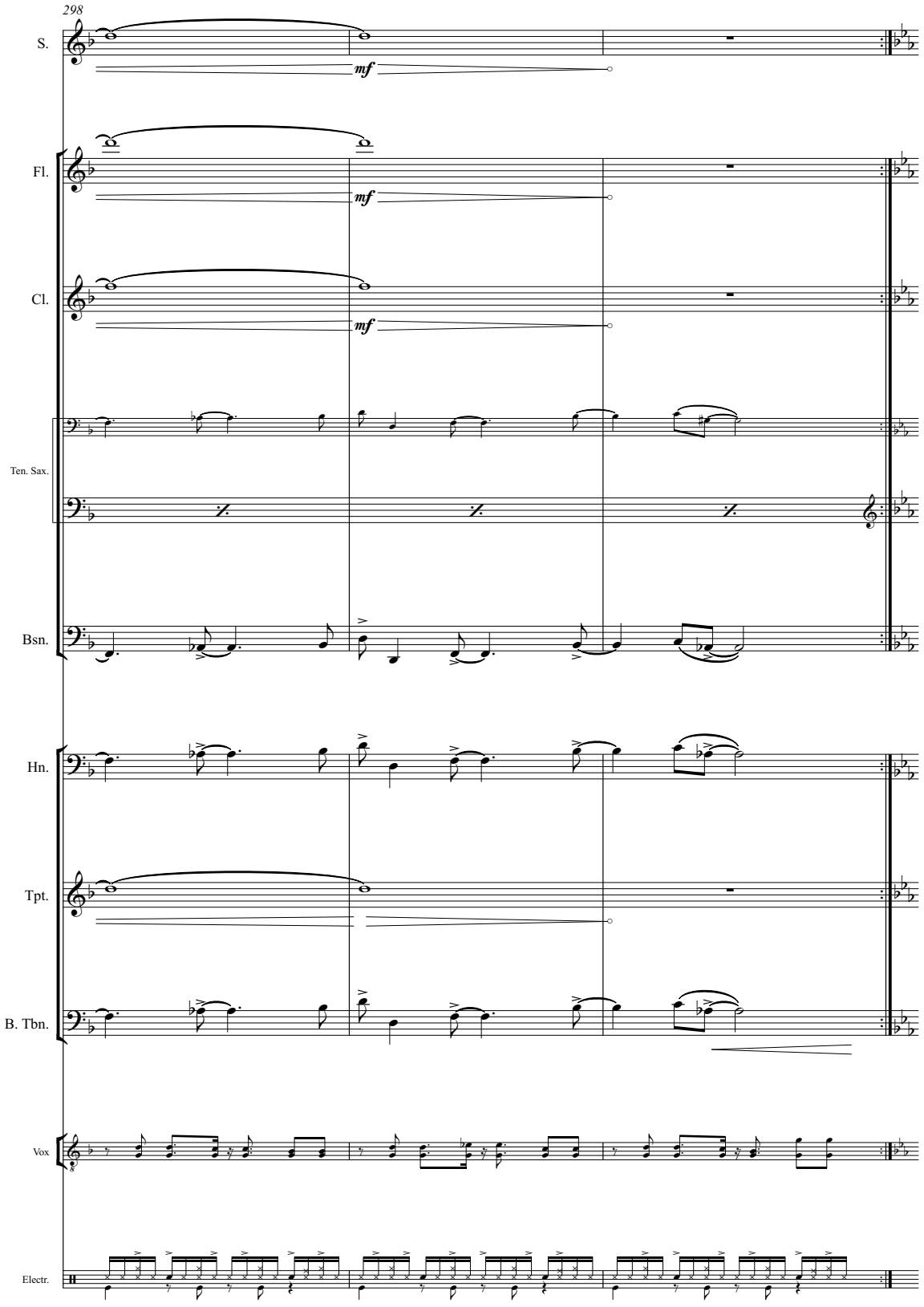

V2
280
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.
p
mp
mf

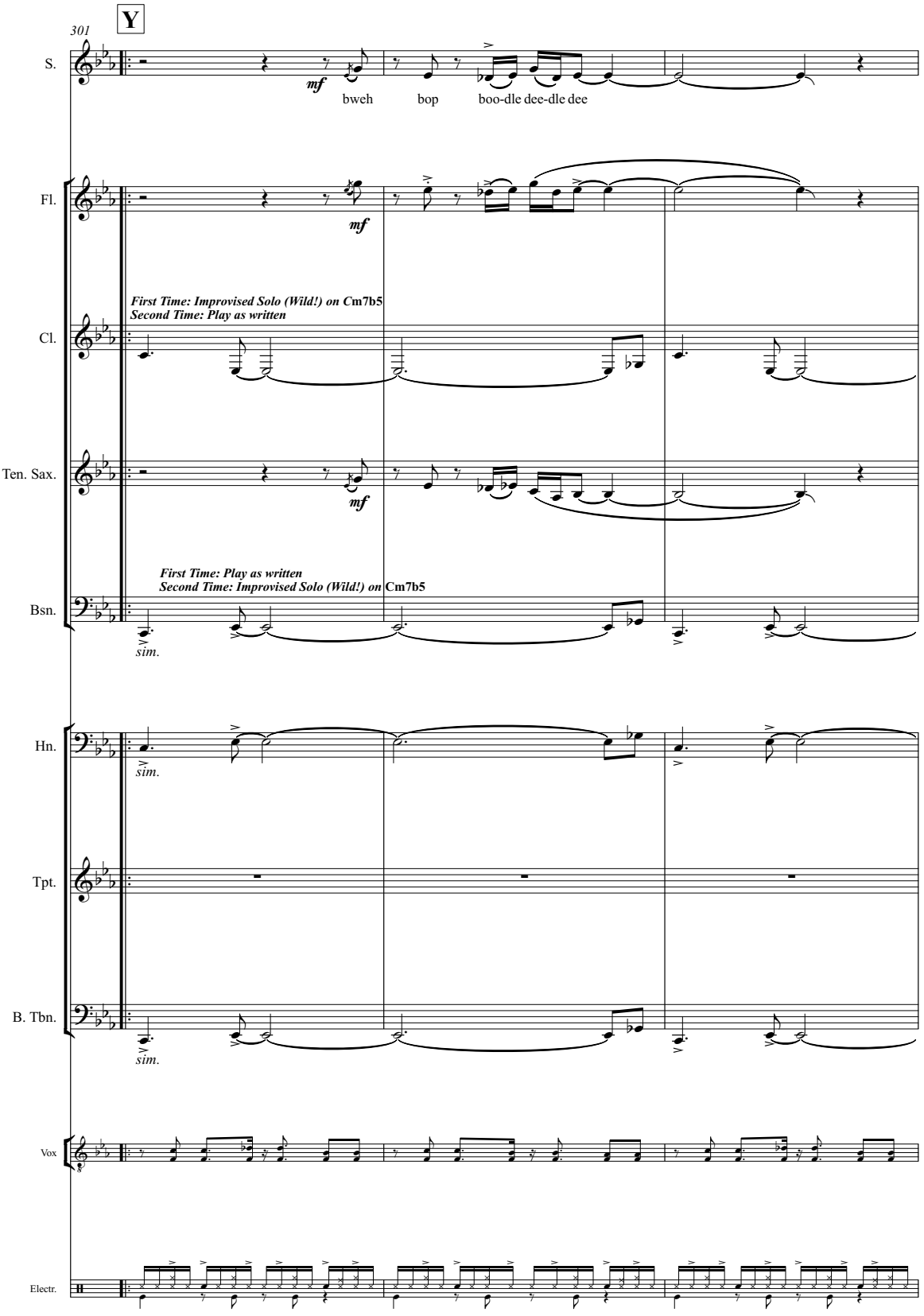

W
284
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
take mute
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.
f
f sub.

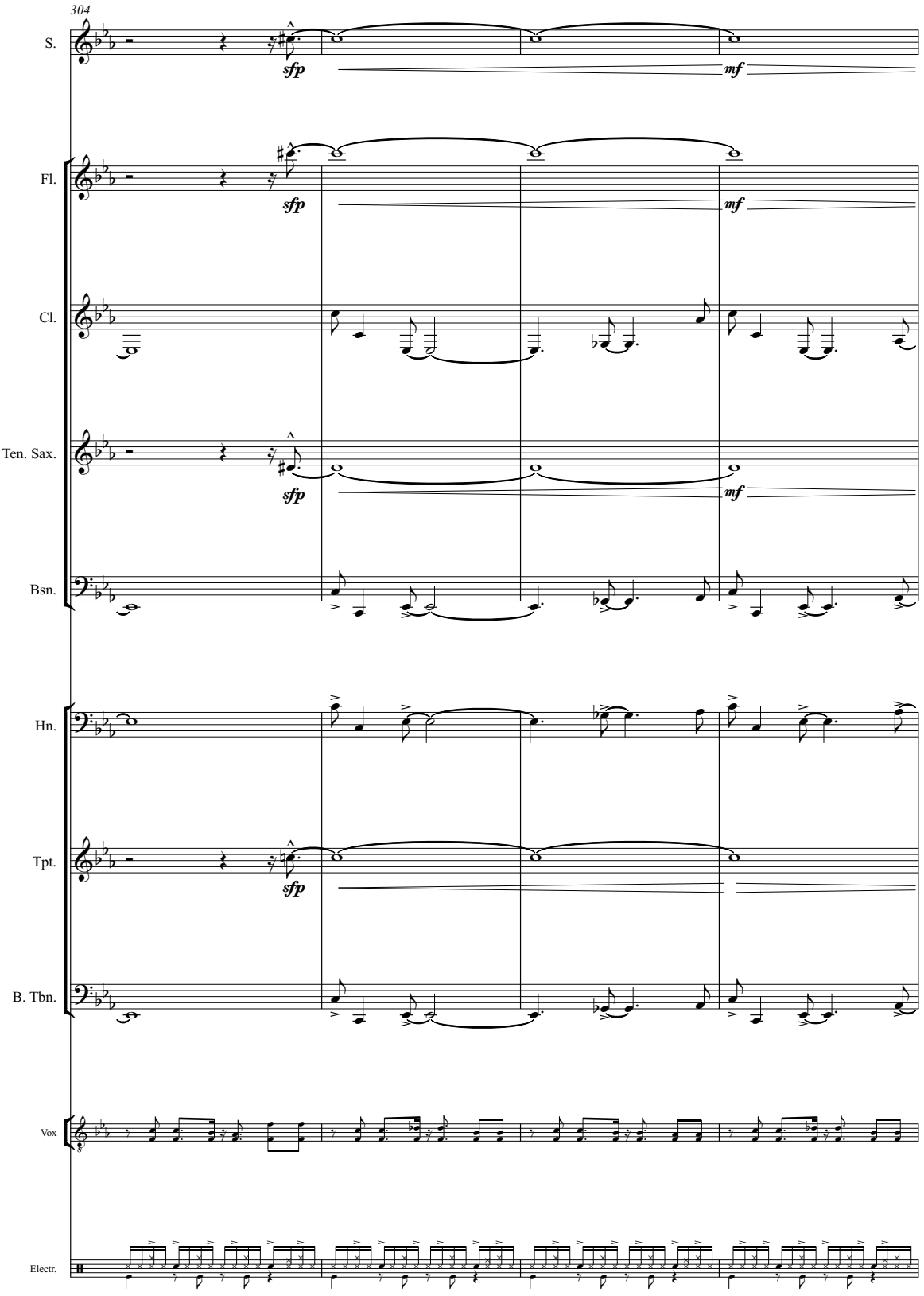

288
S.
sfp
mf
Fl.
sfp
mf
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
f sub.
Bsn.
f sub.
Hn.
f sub.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
f sub.
Vox
Electr.

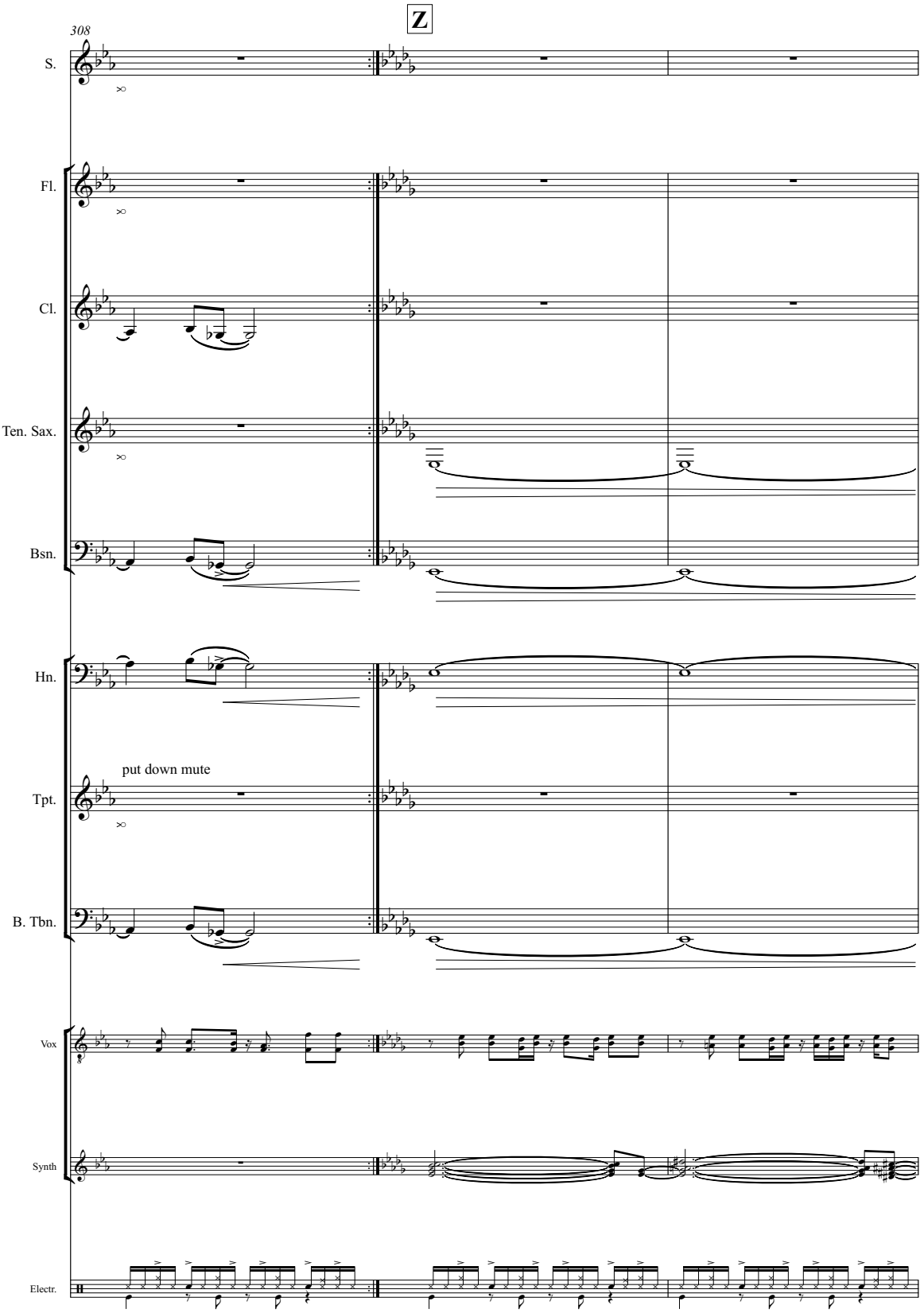

X
292
S.
bweh
mf
bop
boo-dle dee-dle dee
Fl.
mf
Cl.
mf
Bassline, for reference
Improvised Solo - Wild!
Ten. Sax.
Dm7(b5)
Bsn.
f
f sub.
(second time only)
Hn.
f
f sub.
Tpt.
(first time only)
B. Tbn.
f
f sub.
Vox
Electr.

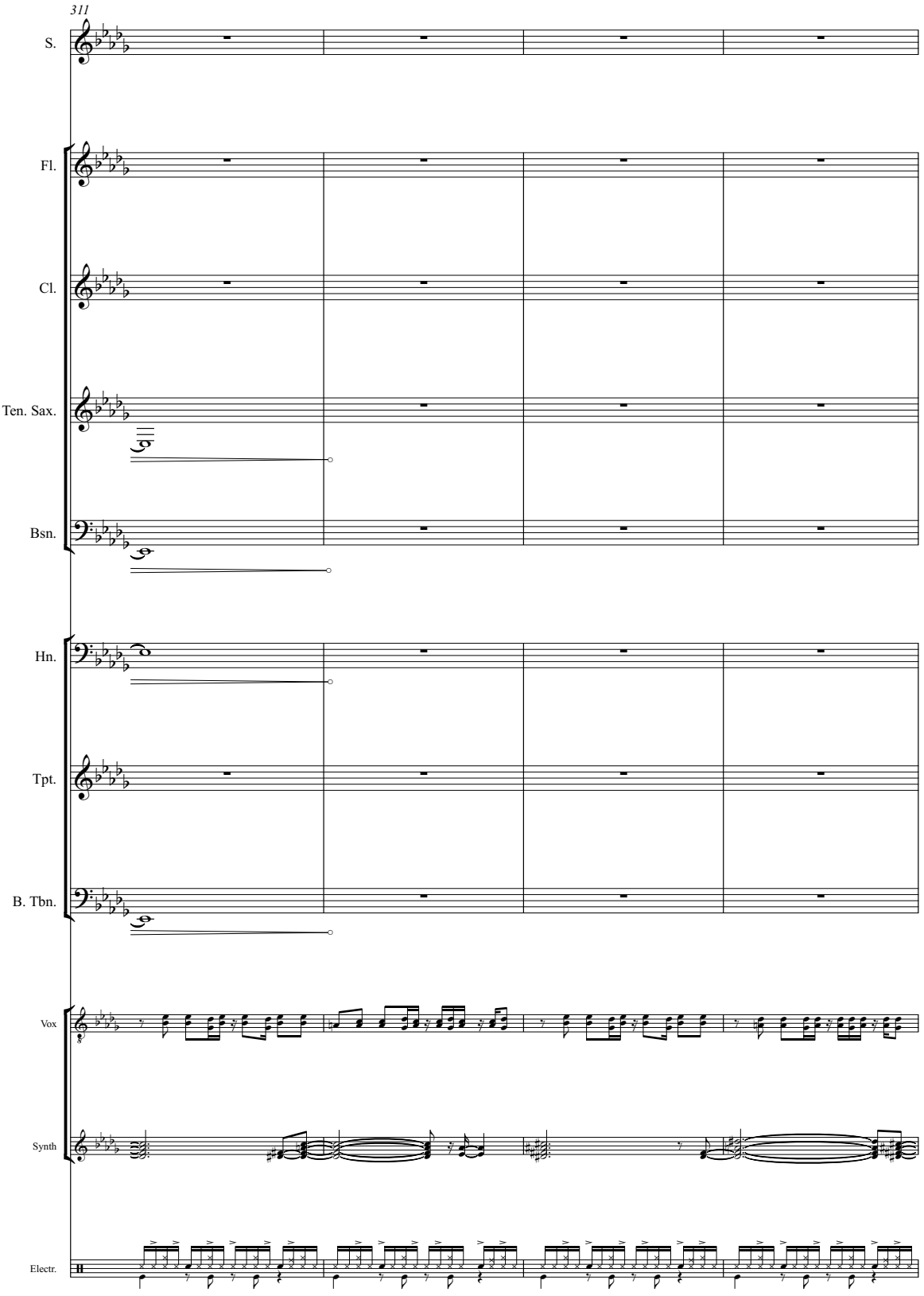

295
S.
sfp
Fl.
sfp
Cl.
sfp
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
f sub.
Hn.
f sub.
with mute
Tpt.
sfp
B. Tbn.
f sub.
Vox
Electr.

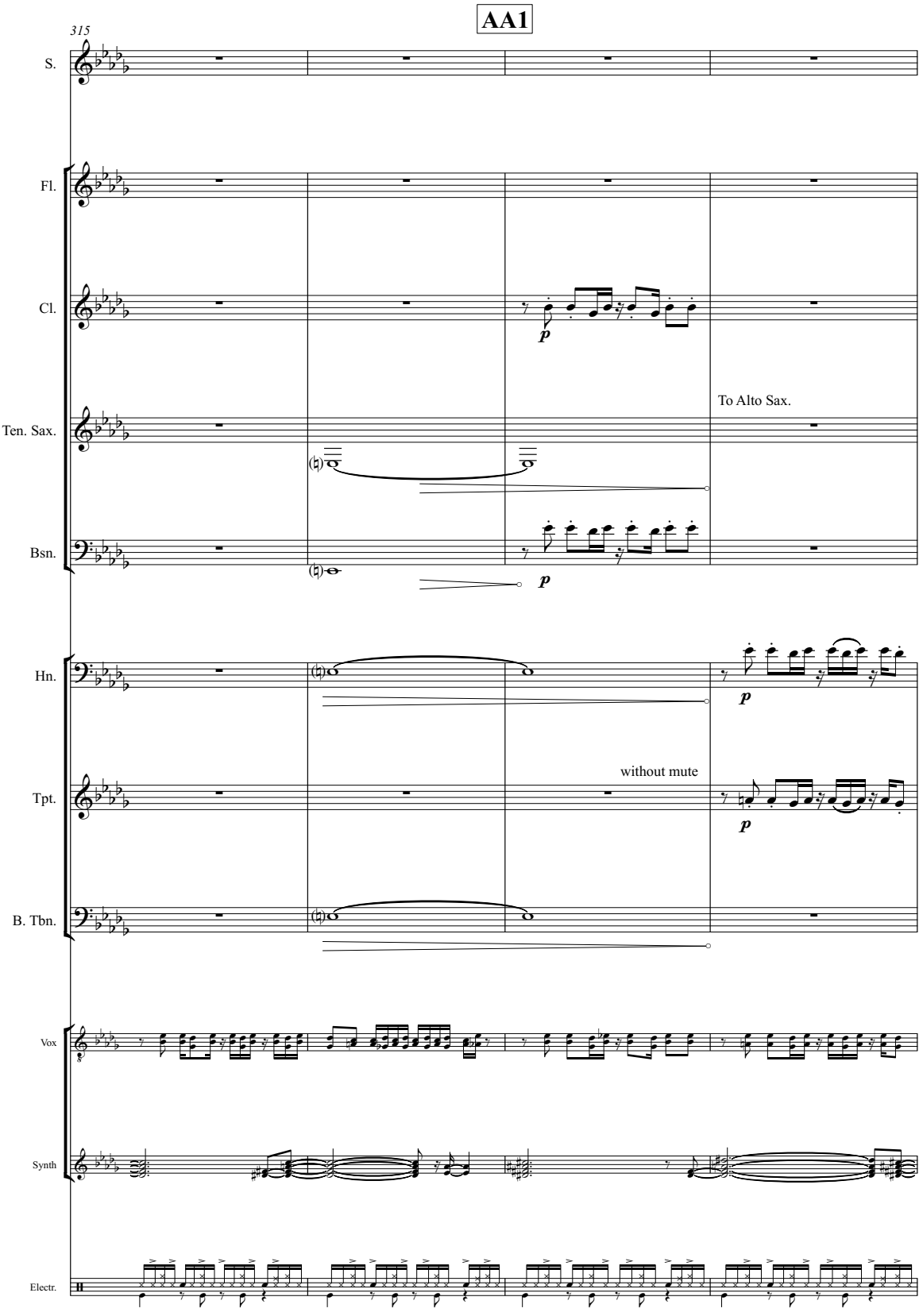

298
S.
mf
Fl.
mf
Cl.
mf
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.

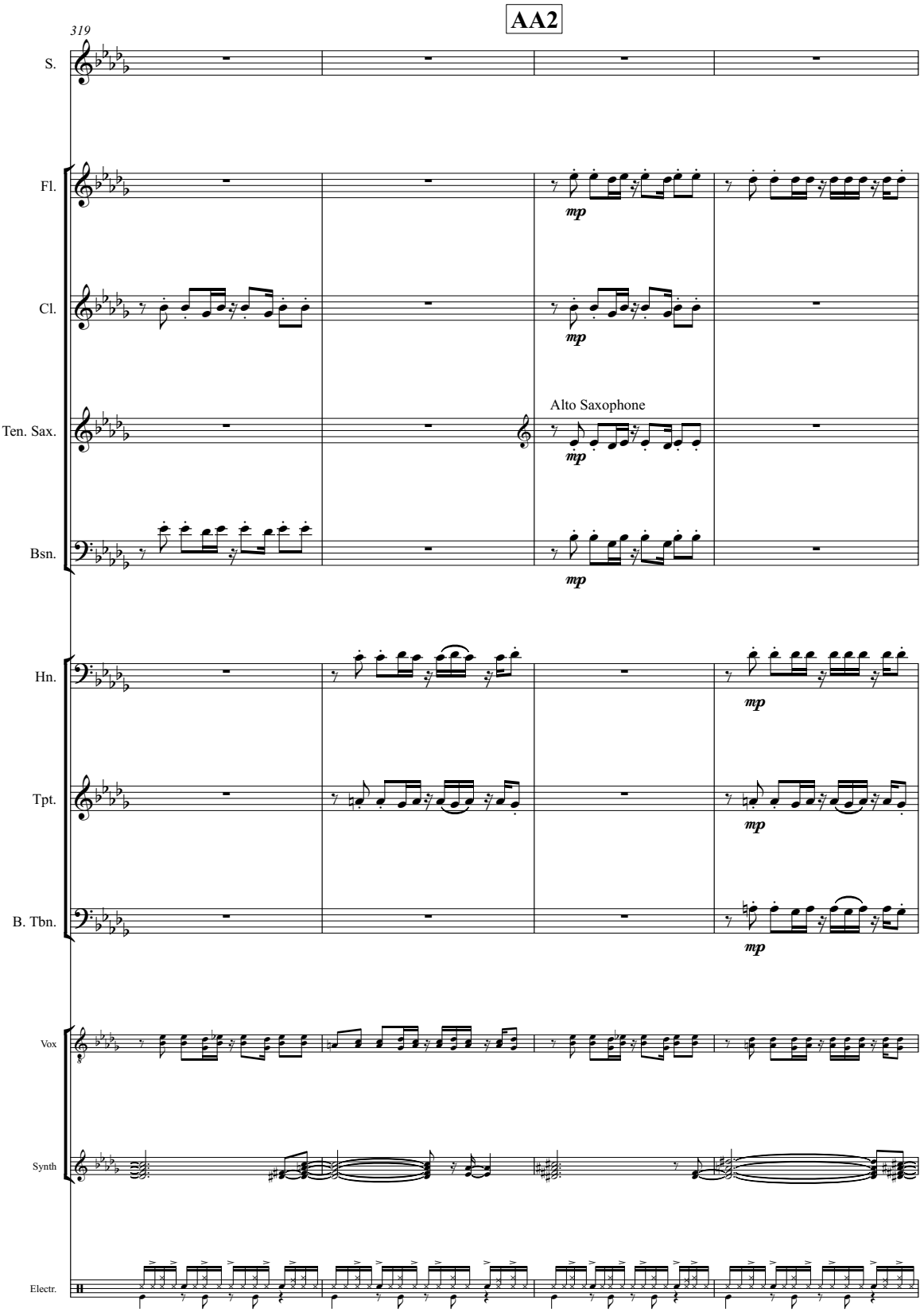

301
Y
S.
mf
bweh
bop
boo-dle dee-dle dee
Fl.
mf
First Time: Improvised Solo (Wild!) on Cm7b5
Second Time: Play as written
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
mf
First Time: Play as written
Second Time: Improvised Solo (Wild!) on Cm7b5
Bsn.
sim.
Hn.
sim.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
sim.
Vox
Electr.

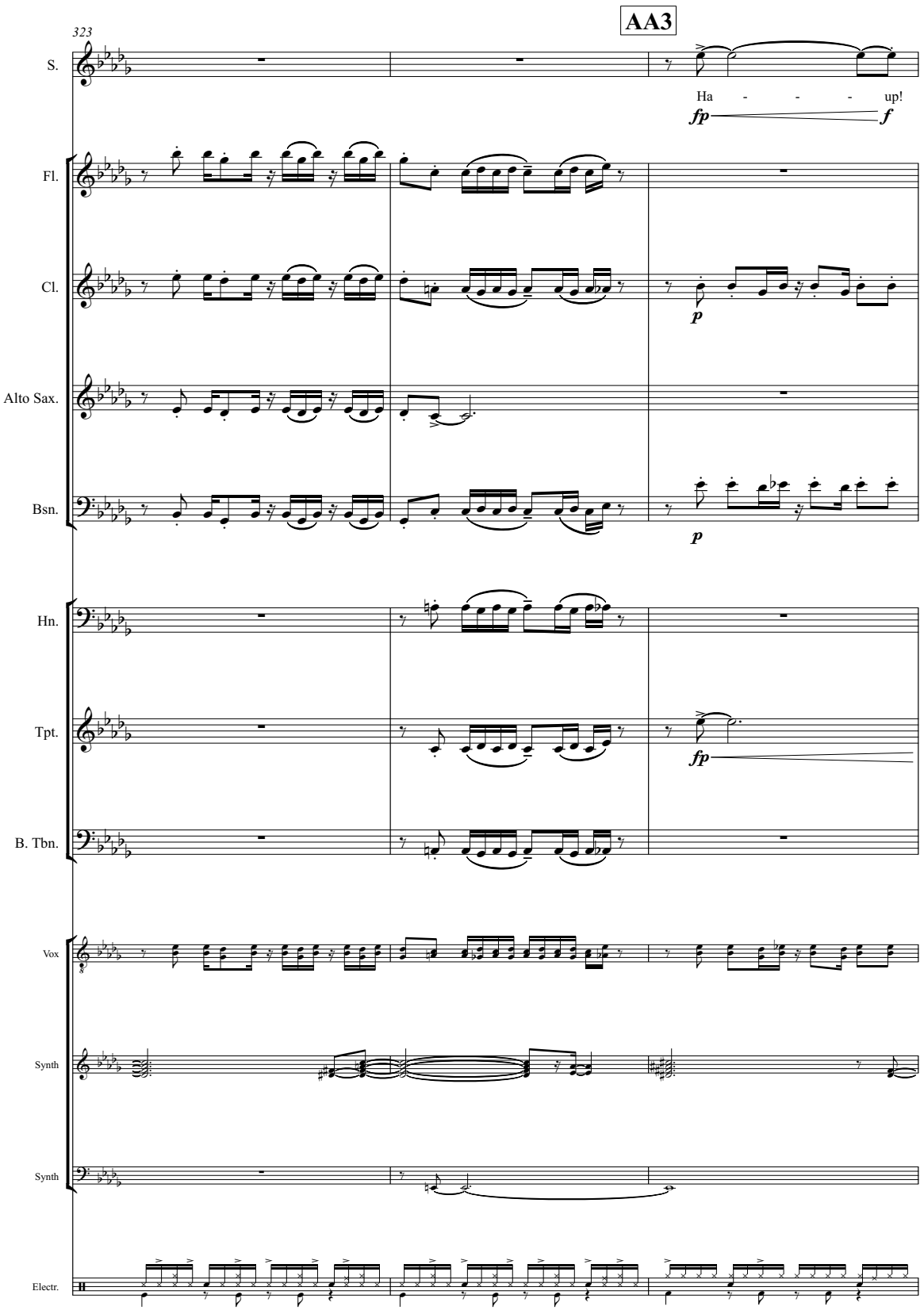

304
S.
sfp
mf
Fl.
sfp
mf
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
sfp
mf
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
sfp
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.

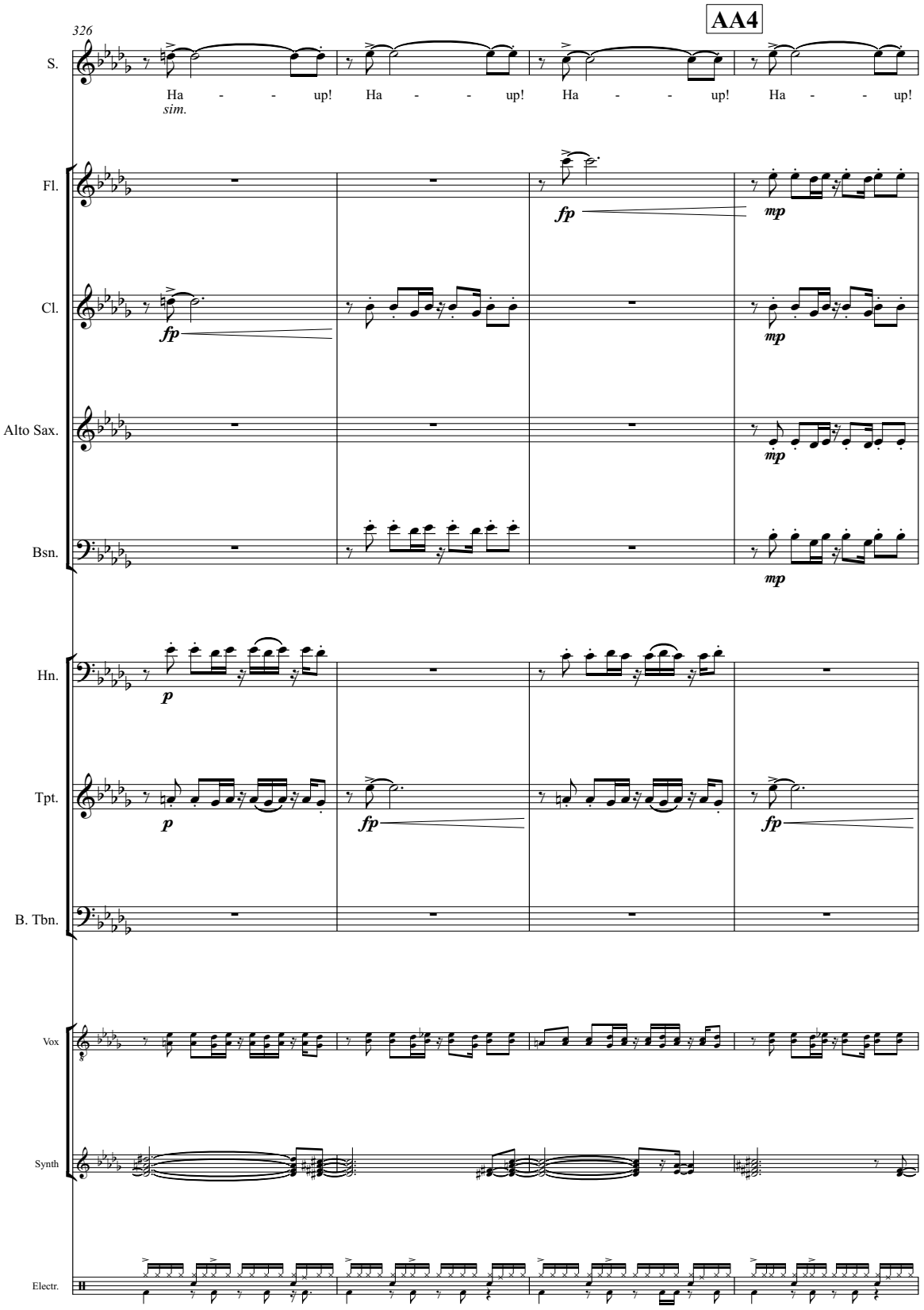

Z
308
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
put down mute
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Electr.

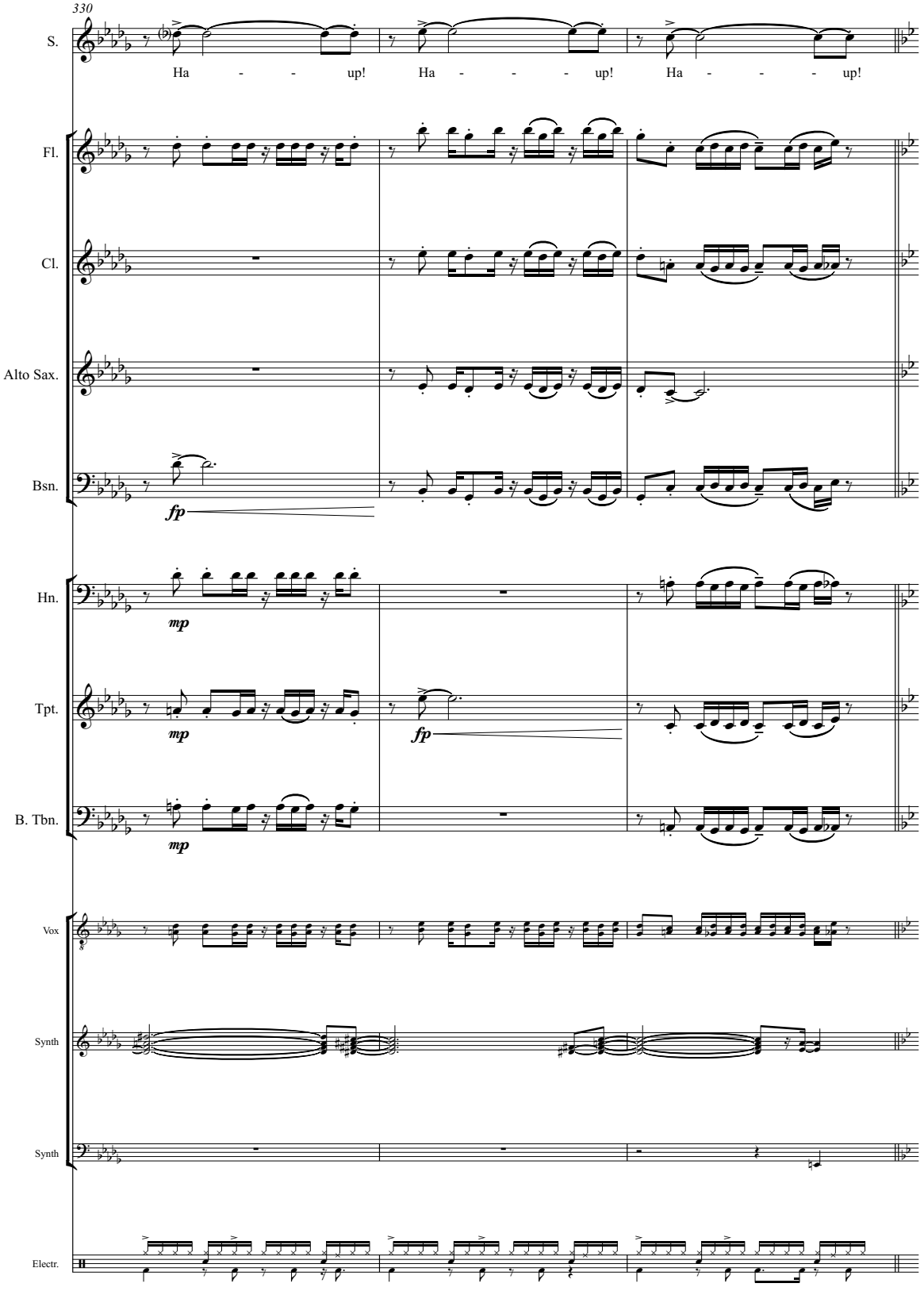

311
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Electr.

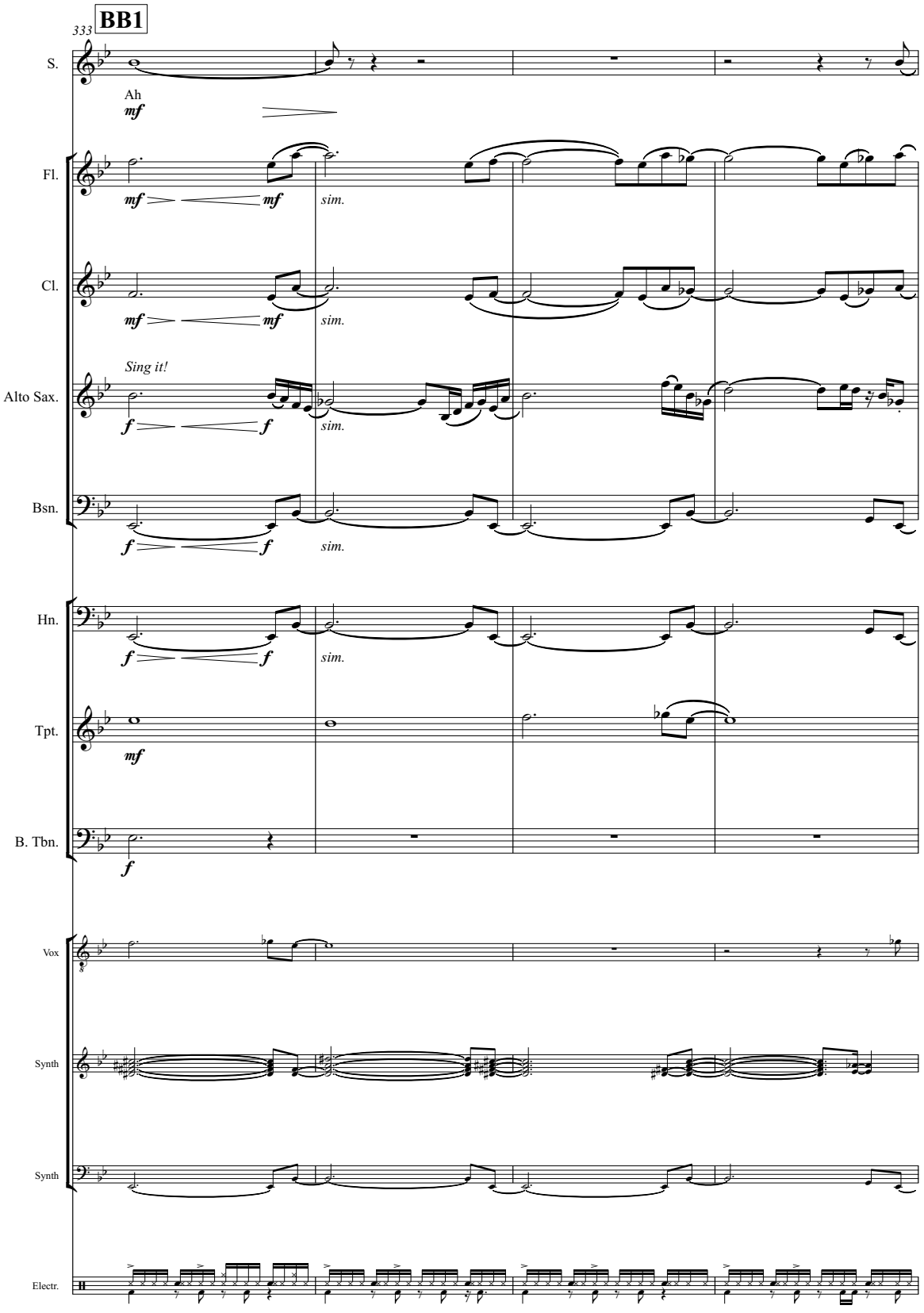

AA1
315
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Electr.
To Alto Sax.
without mute
p

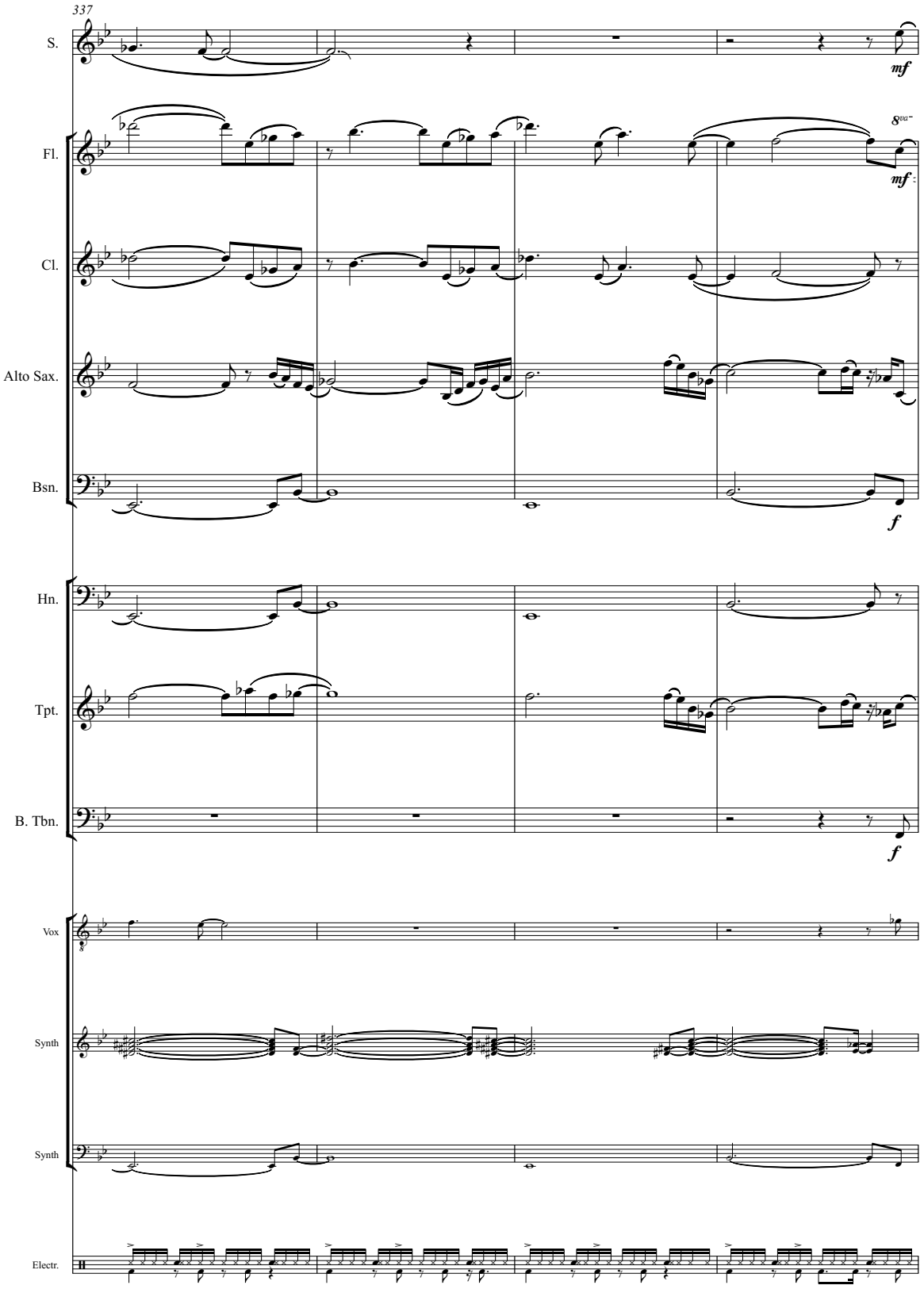

AA2
319
S.
Fl.
mp
Cl.
mp
Alto Saxophone
Ten. Sax.
mp
Bsn.
mp
Hn.
mp
Tpt.
mp
B. Tbn.
mp
Vox
Synth
Electr.

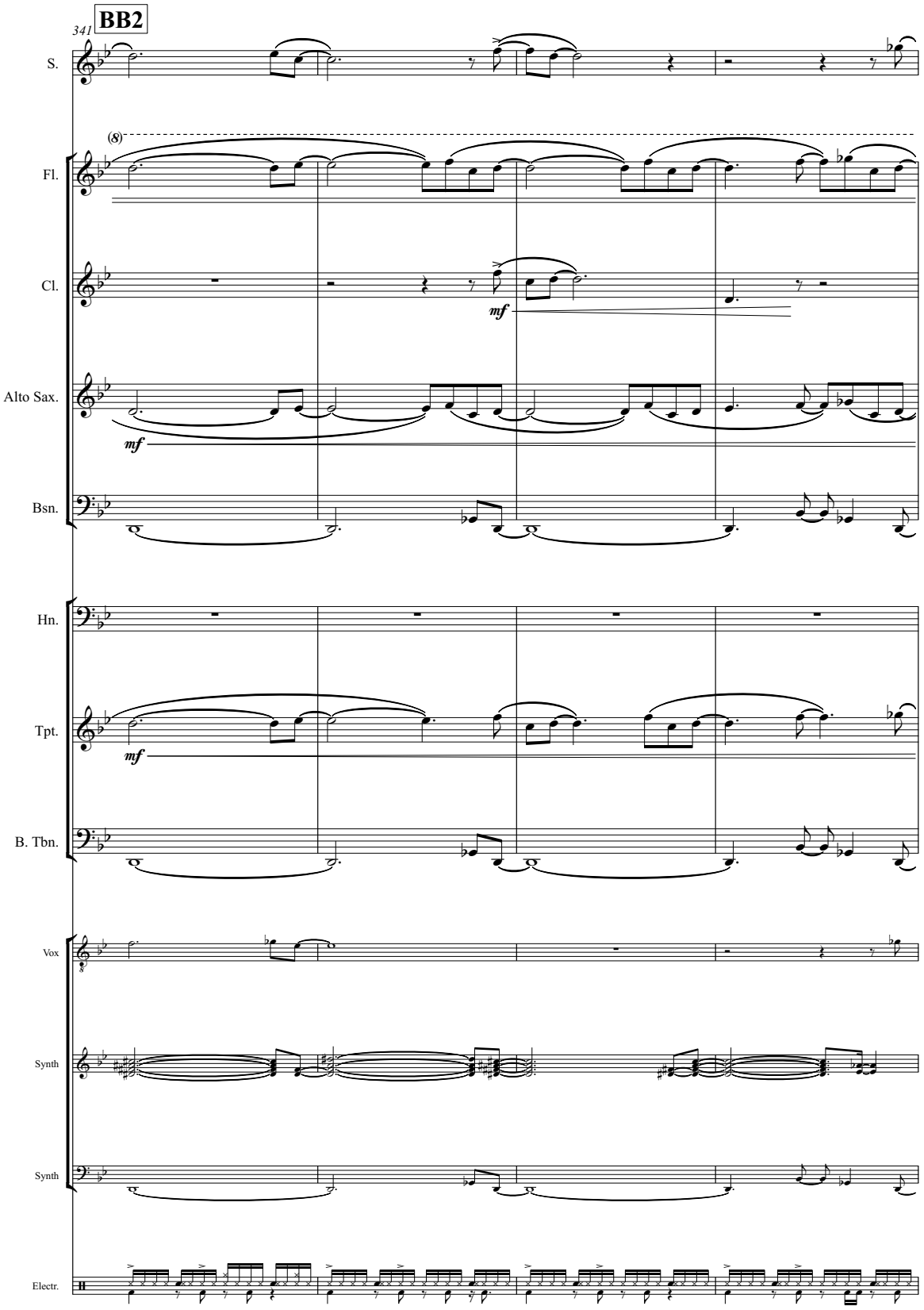

AA3
323
S.
Ha - - - up!
fp
f
Fl.
Cl.
p
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
p
Hn.
Tpt.
fp
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Synth
Electr.

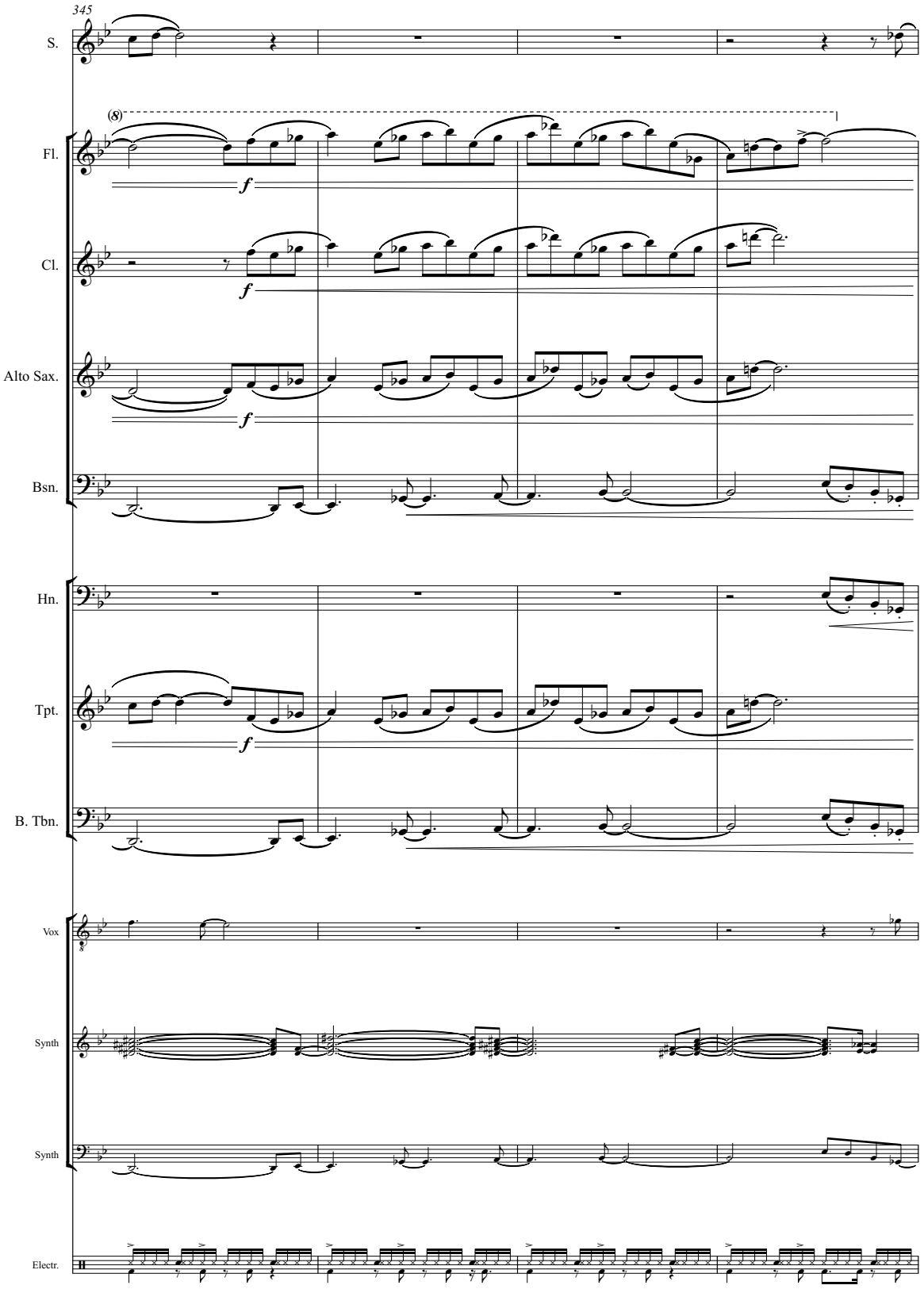

AA4
326
S.
Ha - - up! Ha - - up! Ha - - up! Ha - - up!
sim.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Electr.
fp
mp
p

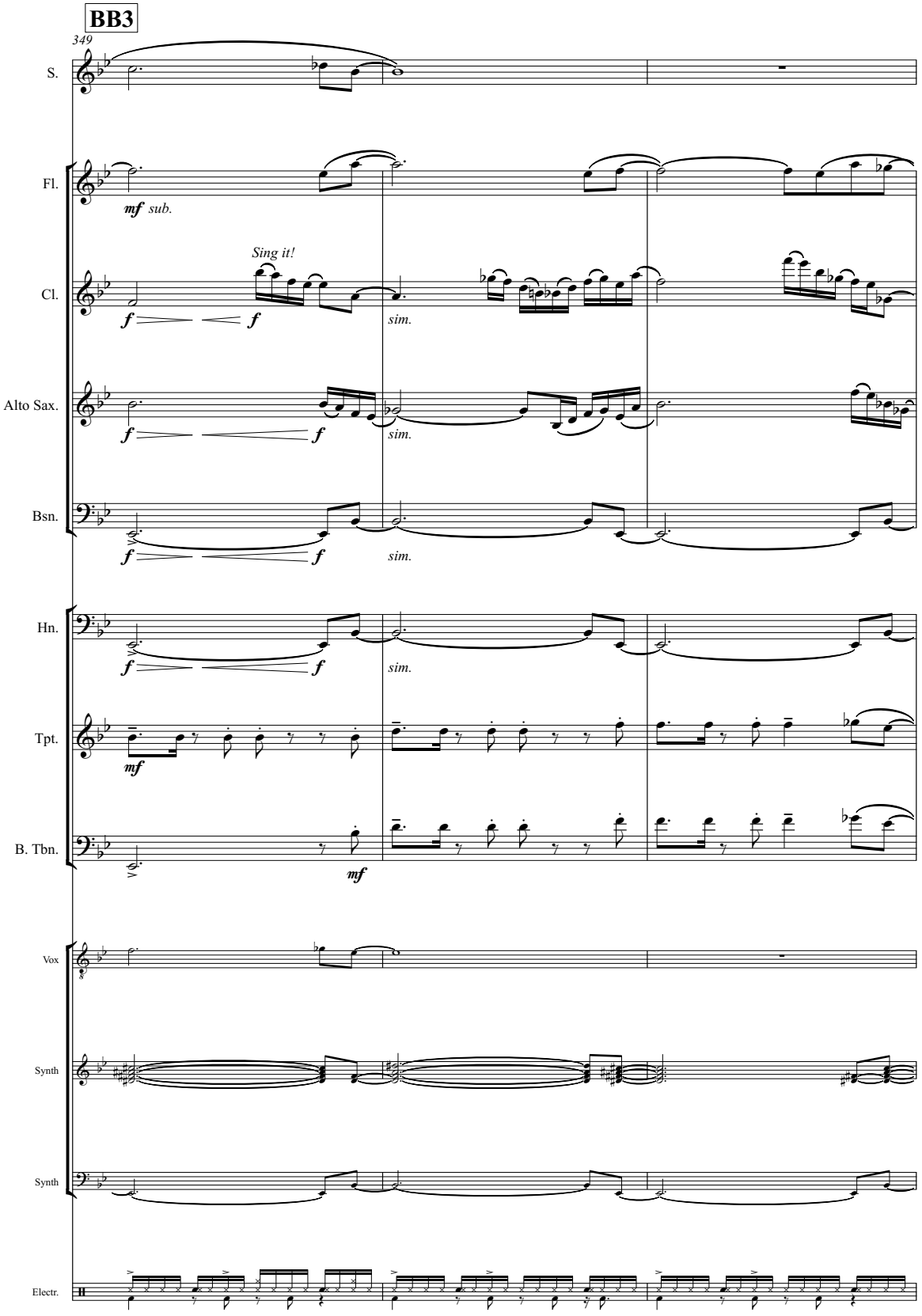

330
S.
Ha - - up! Ha - - - up! Ha - - - up!
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
fp
Hn.
mp
Tpt.
mp
fp
B. Tbn.
mp
Vox
Synth
Synth
Electr.

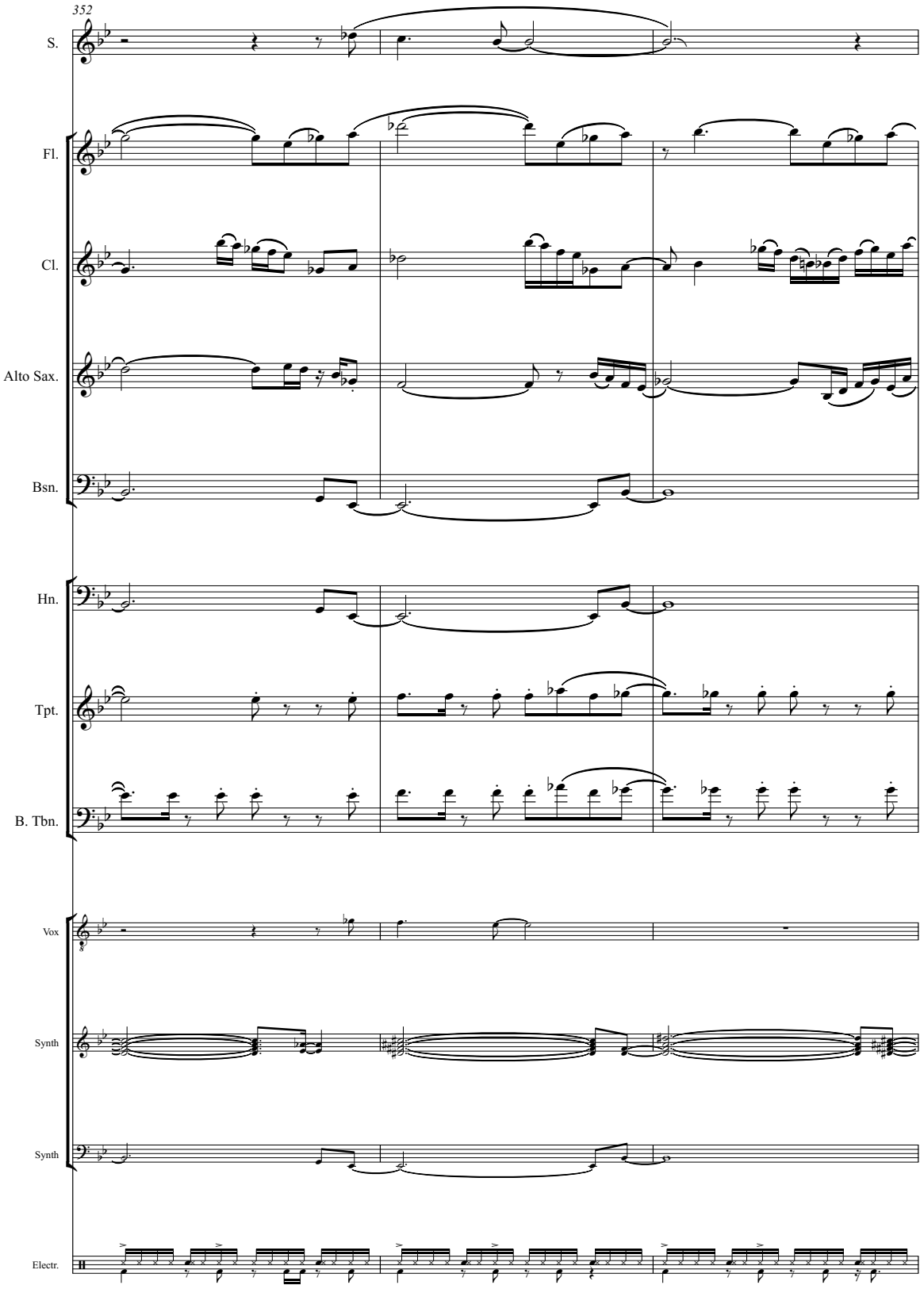

333
BB1
S.
Ah
mf
Fl.
mf
mf
sim.
Cl.
mf
mf
sim.
Sing it!
Alto Sax.
f
f
sim.
Bsn.
f
f
sim.
Hn.
f
f
sim.
Tpt.
mf
B. Tbn.
f
Vox
Synth
Synth
Electr.

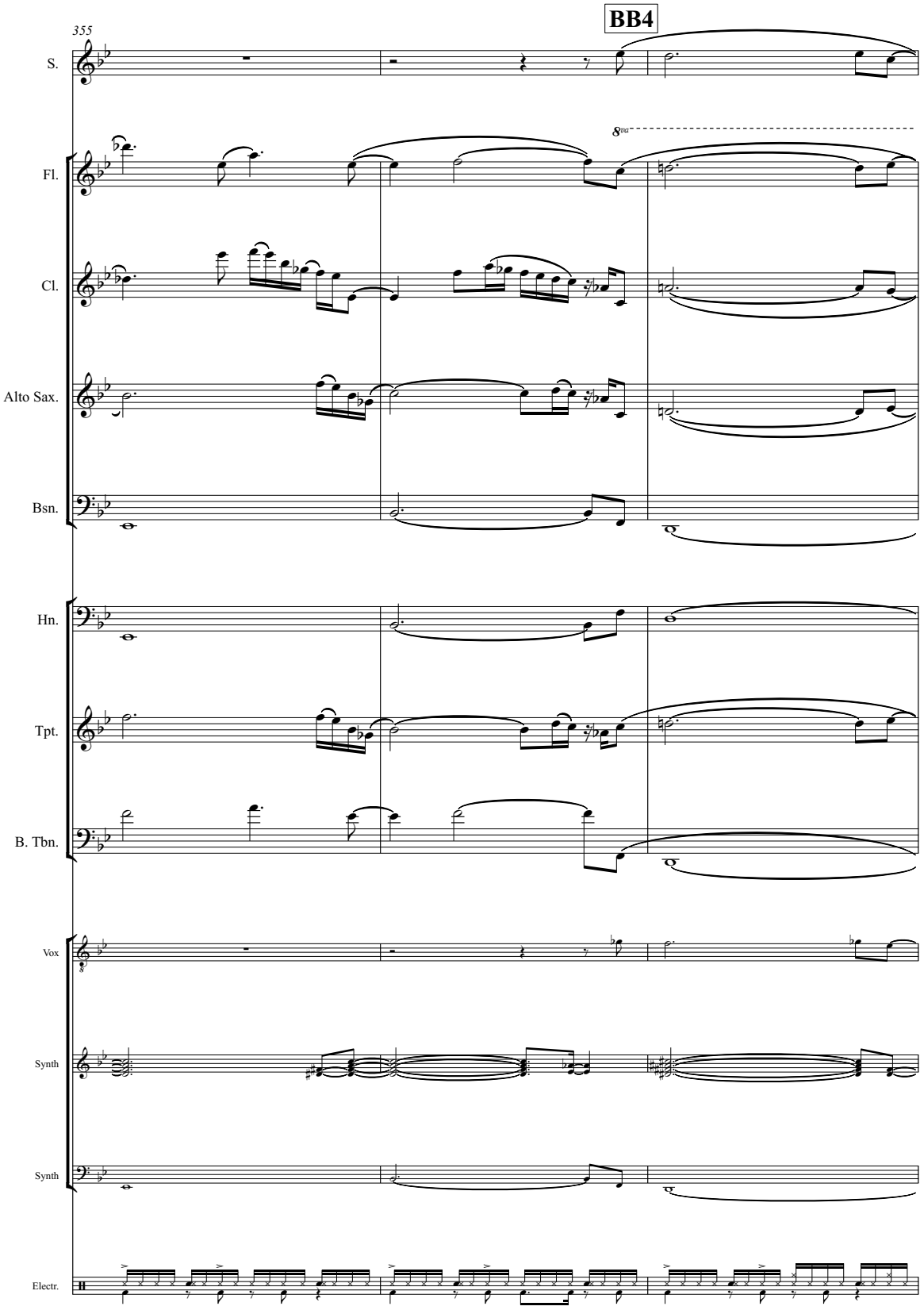

337
S.
mf
8va
Fl.
mf
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
f
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
f
Vox
Synth
Synth
Electr.

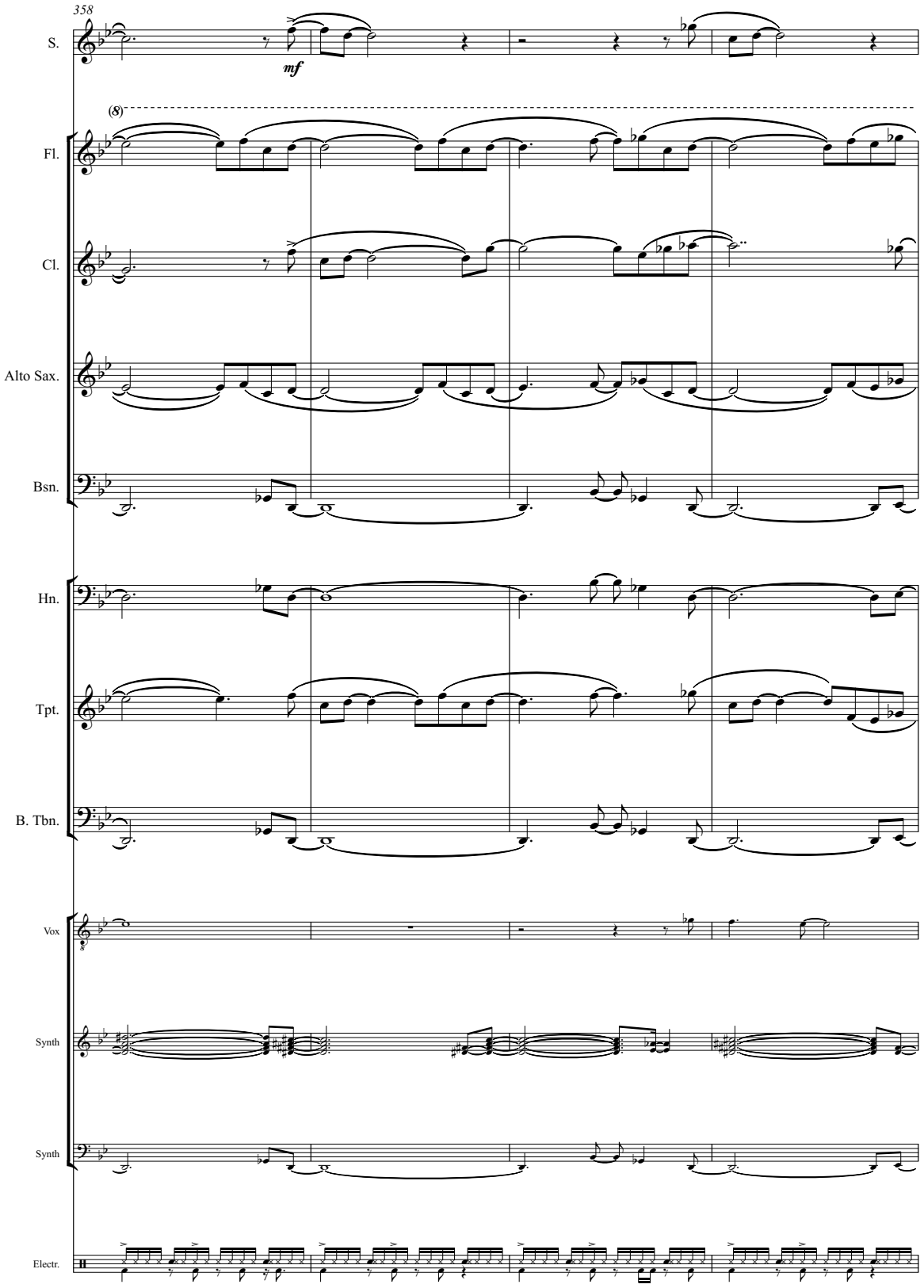

341
BB2
S.
(8)
Fl.
Cl.
mf
Alto Sax.
mf
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
mf
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Synth
Electr.

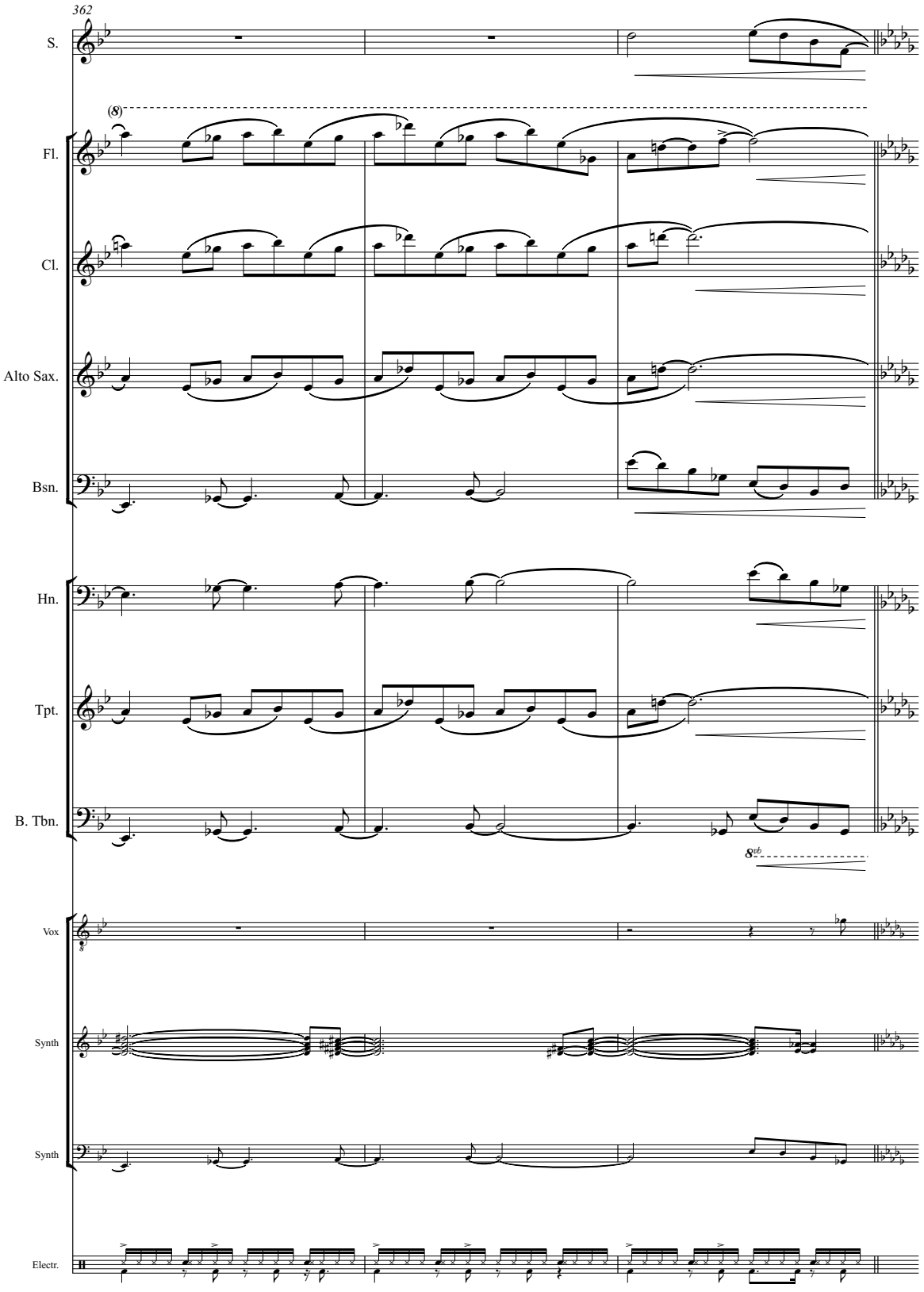

345
S.
(8)
Fl.
f
Cl.
f
Alto Sax.
f
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
f
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Synth
Electr.

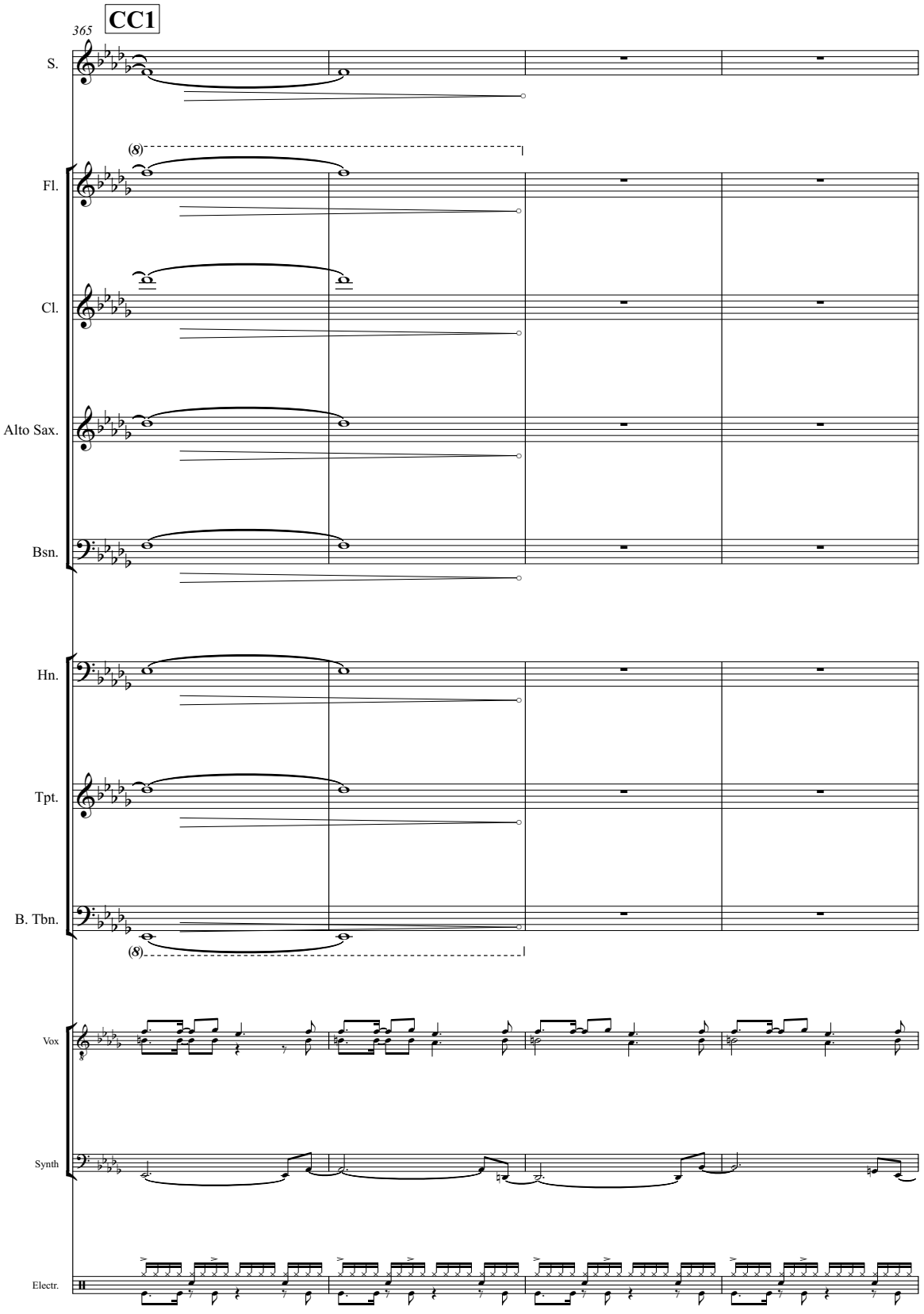

BB3
349
S.
Fl.
mf sub.
Sing it!
Cl.
f
f
sim.
Alto Sax.
f
f
sim.
Bsn.
f
f
sim.
Hn.
f
f
sim.
Tpt.
mf
B. Tbn.
mf
Vox
Synth
Synth
Electr.

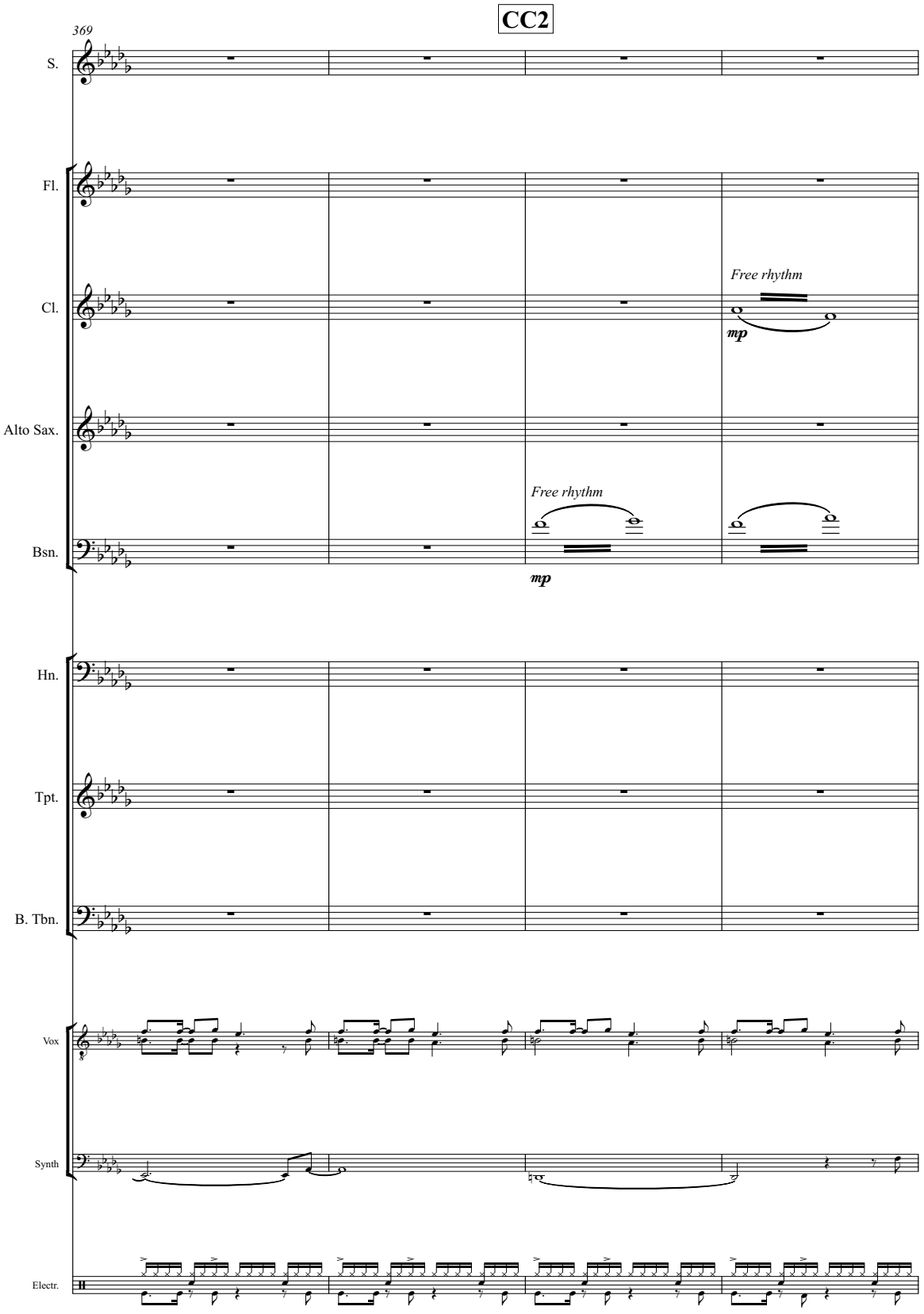

352
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Synth
Electr.

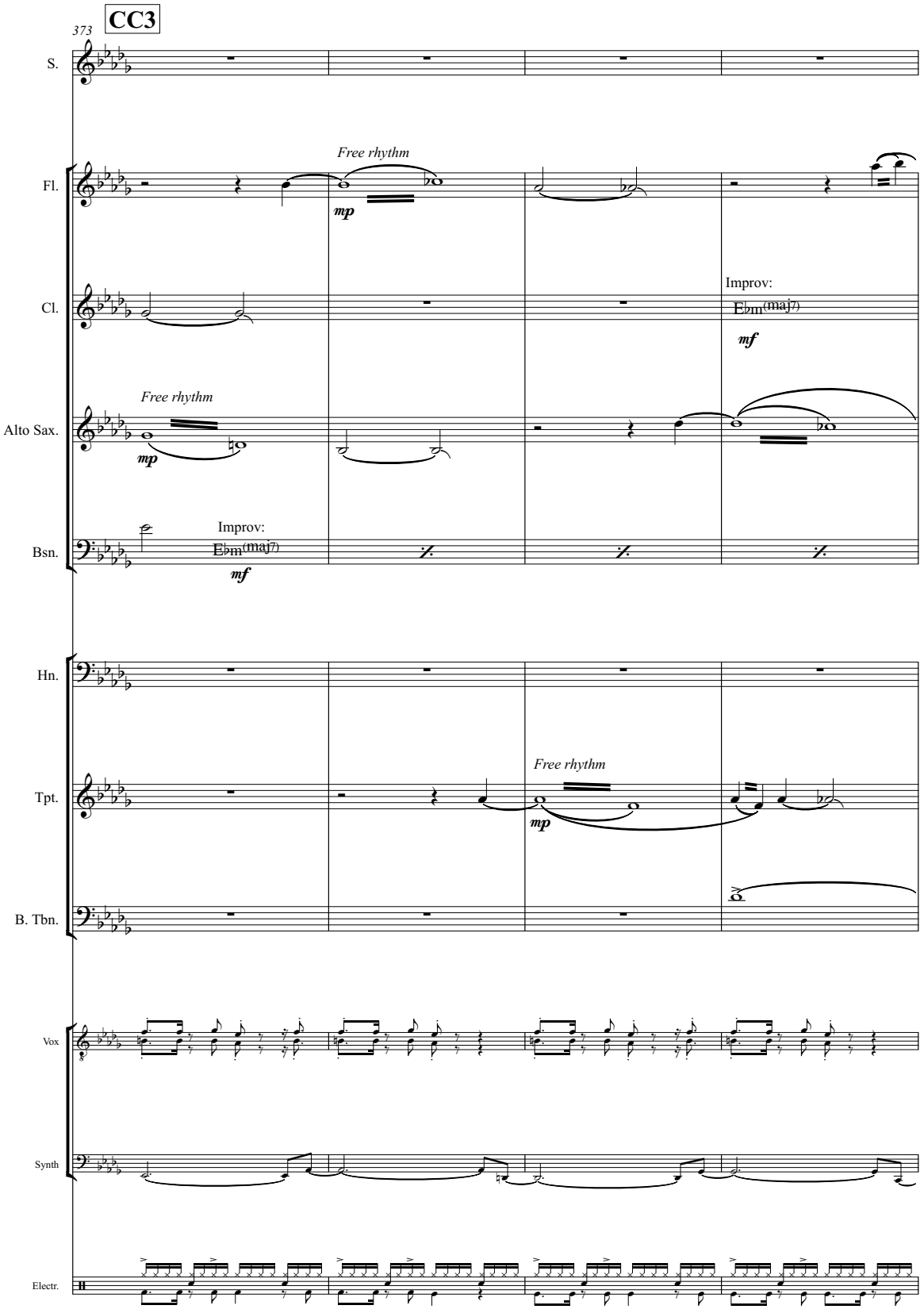

355
BB4
S.
8va
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Synth
Electr.

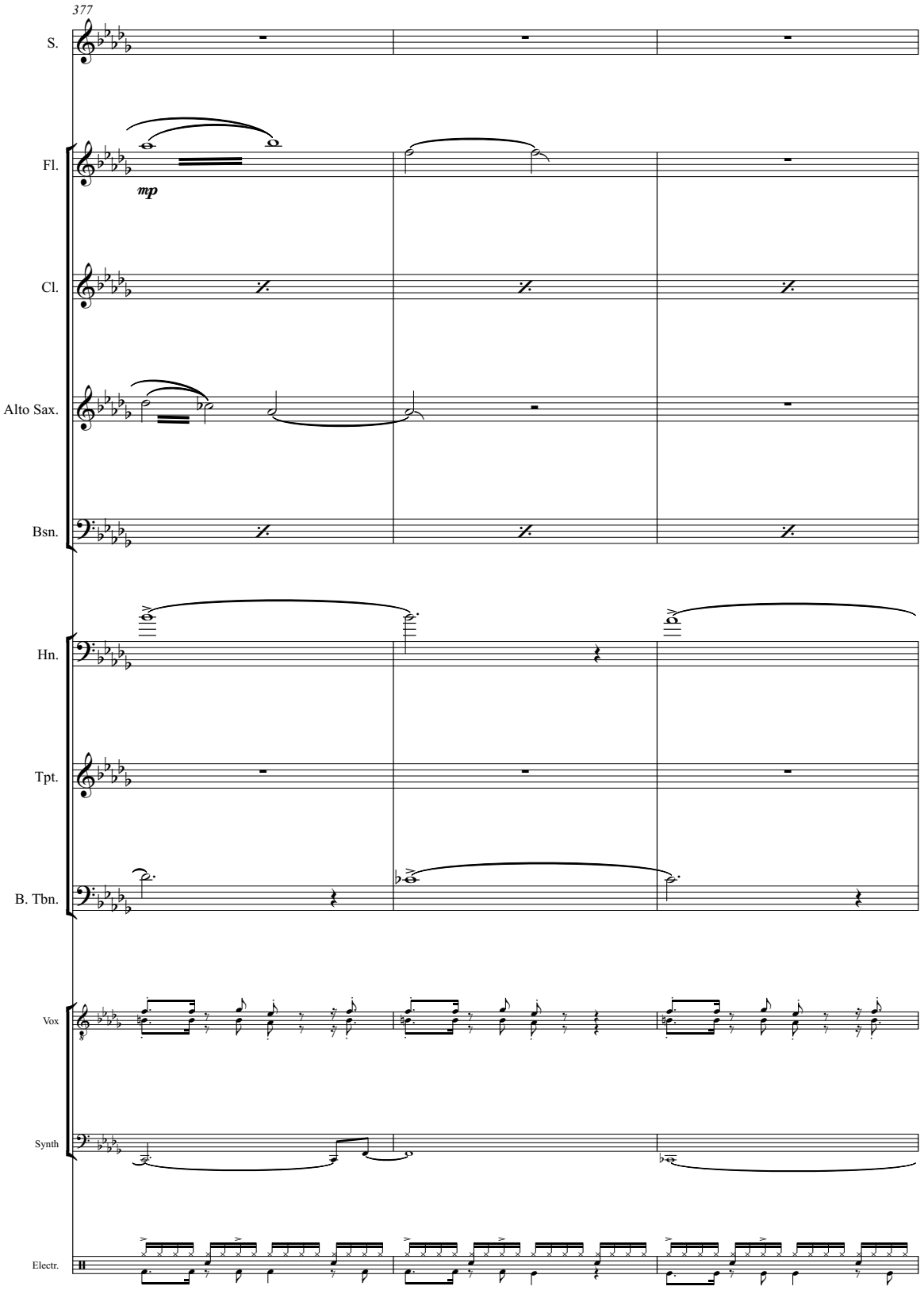

358
S.
mf
(8)
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Synth
Electr.

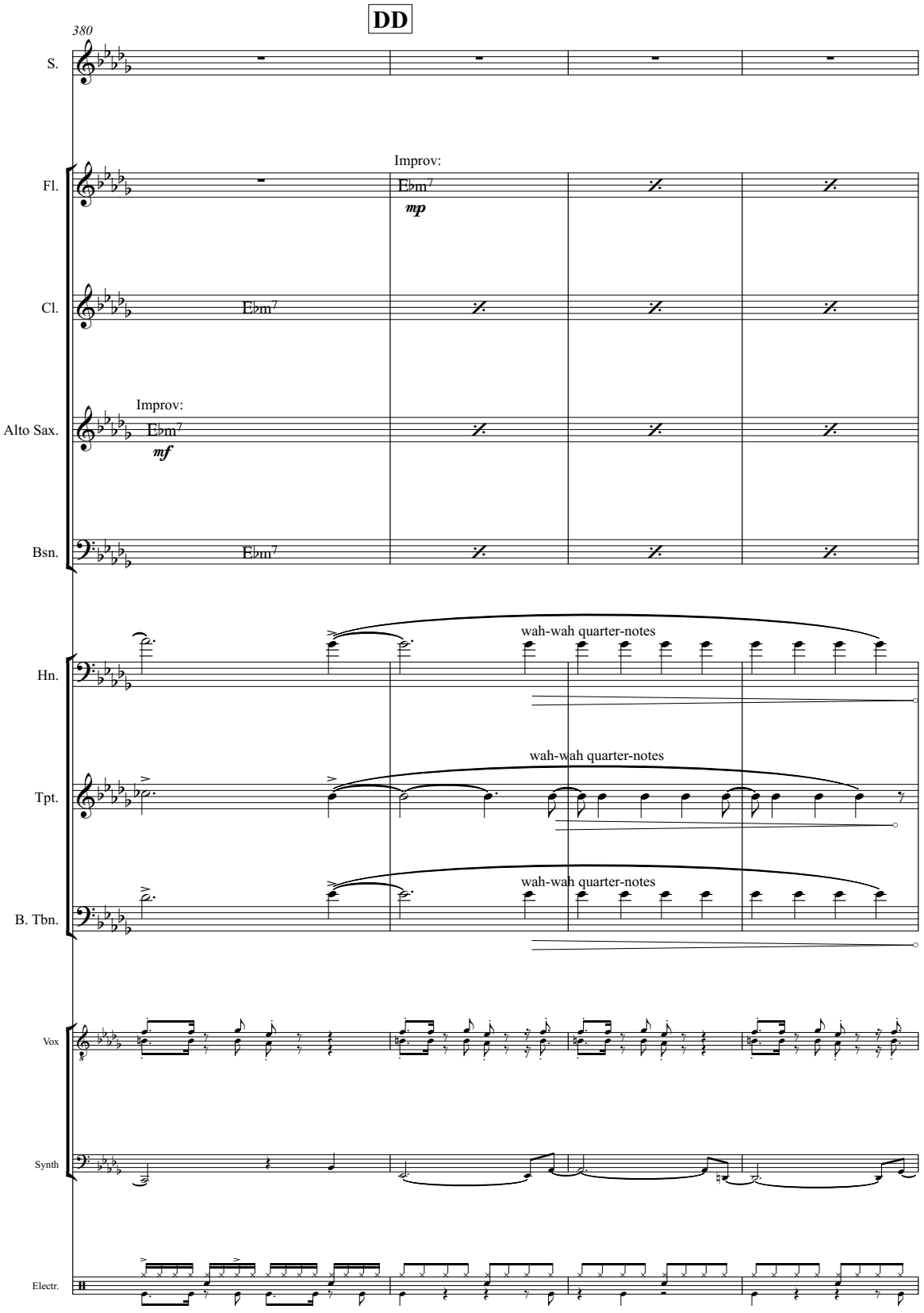

362
S.
(8)
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
8vb
Vox
Synth
Synth
Electr.

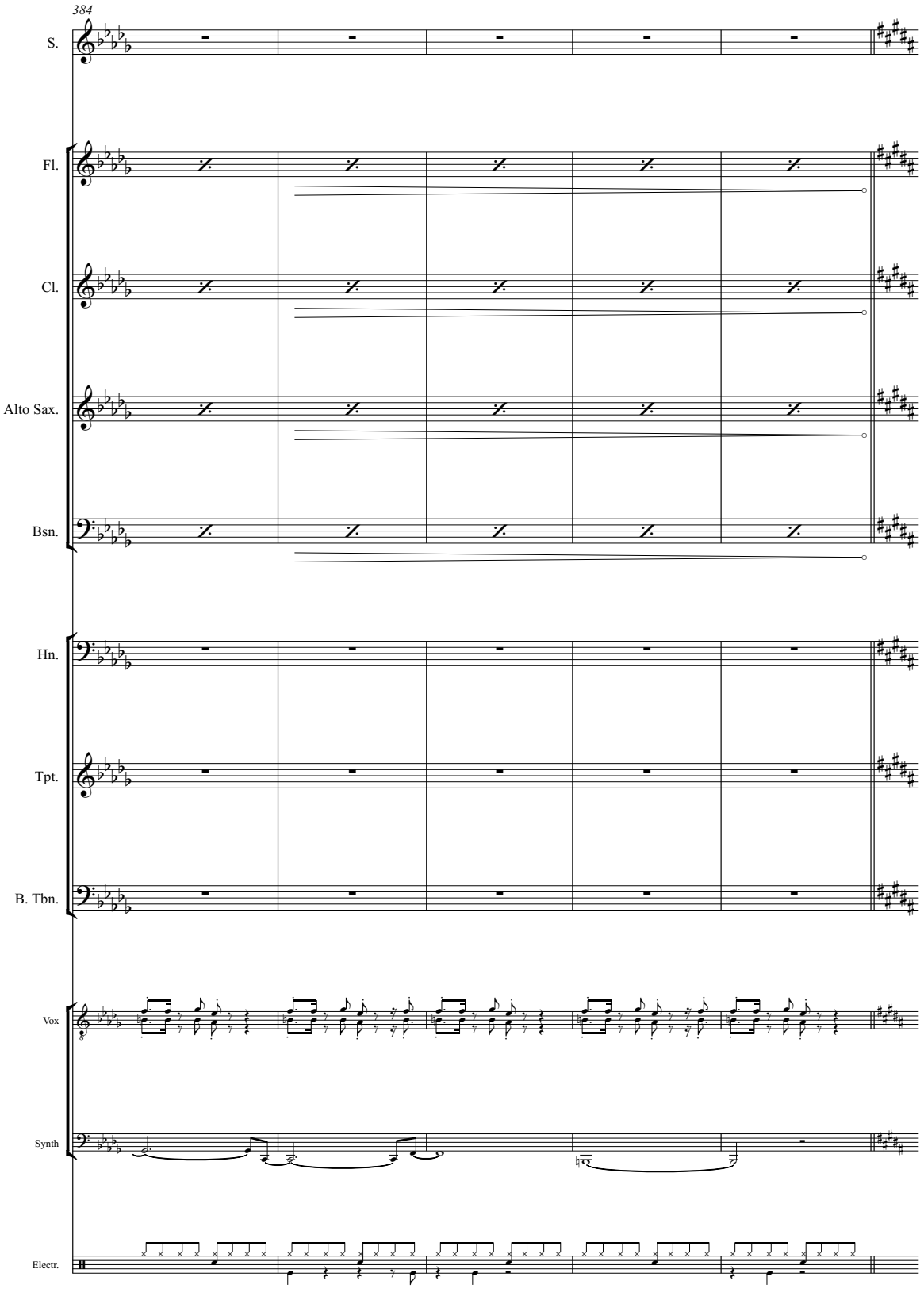

CC1
365
S.
(8)
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
(8)
Vox
Synth
Electr.

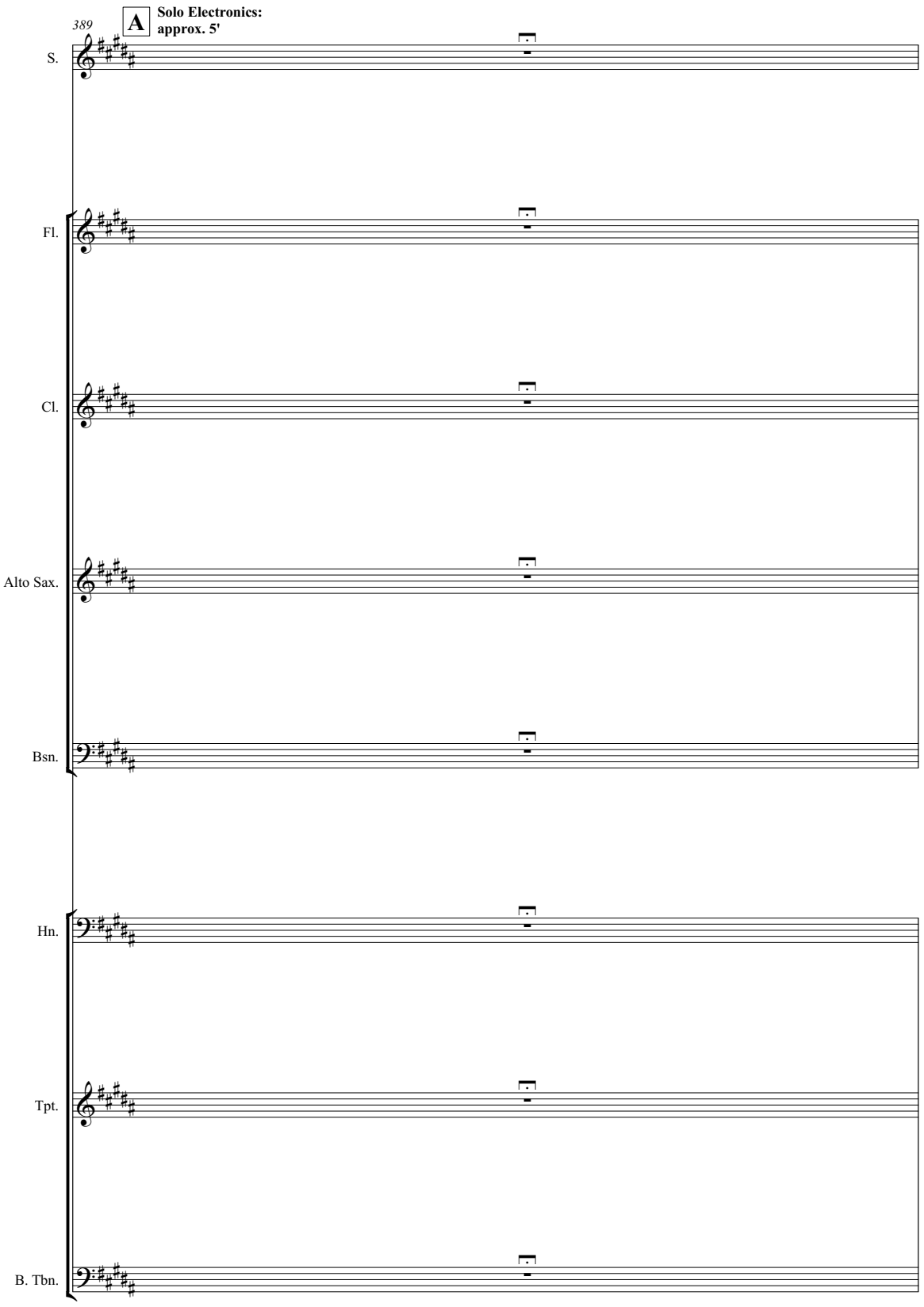

CC2
369
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Free rhythm
mp
Alto Sax.
Free rhythm
Bsn.
mp
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Electr.

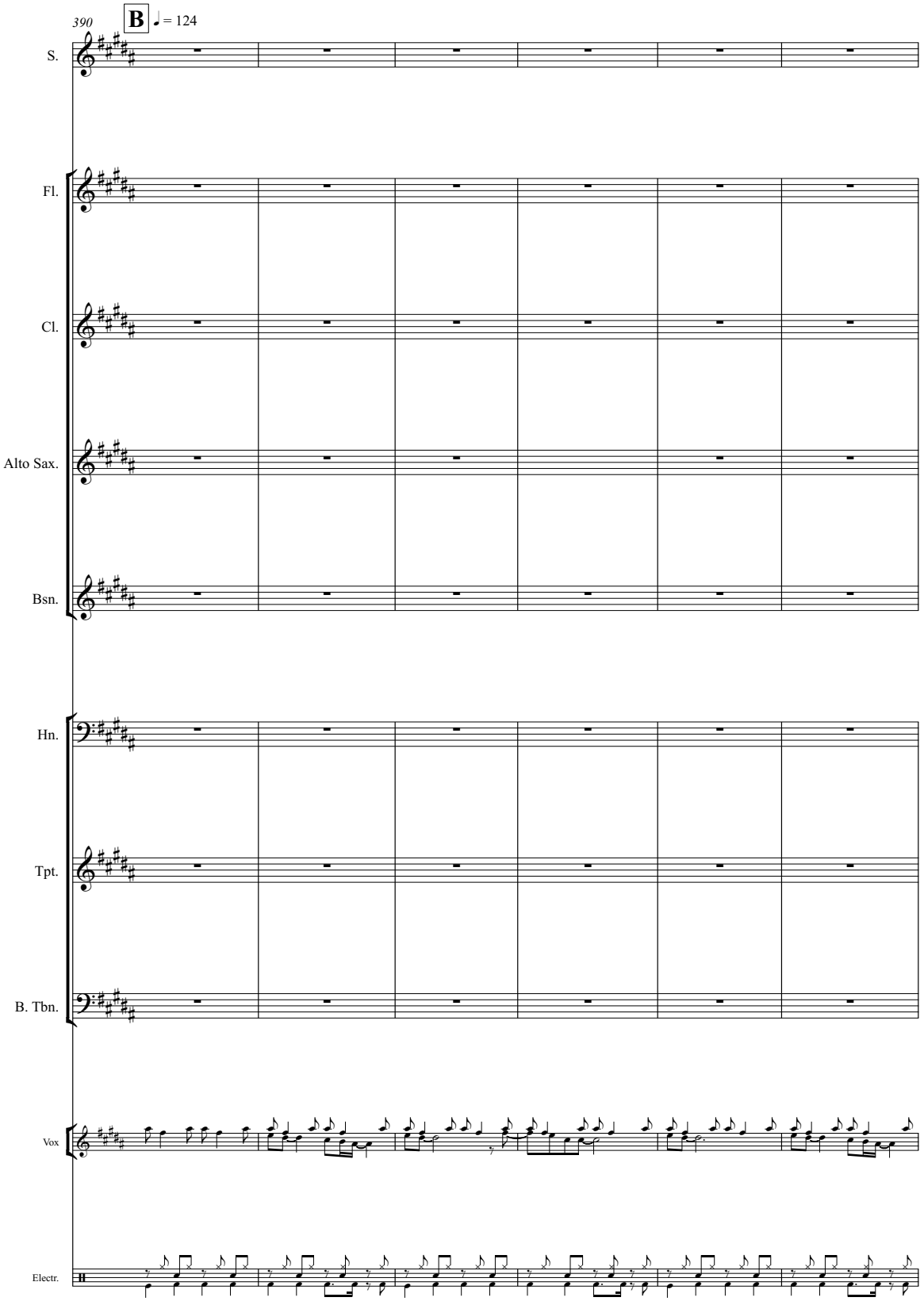

373
CC3
S.
Fl.
Free rhythm
mp
Cl.
Improv:
E♭m(maj7)
mf
Alto Sax.
Free rhythm
mp
Bsn.
Improv:
E♭m(maj7)
mf
Hn.
Tpt.
Free rhythm
mp
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Electr.

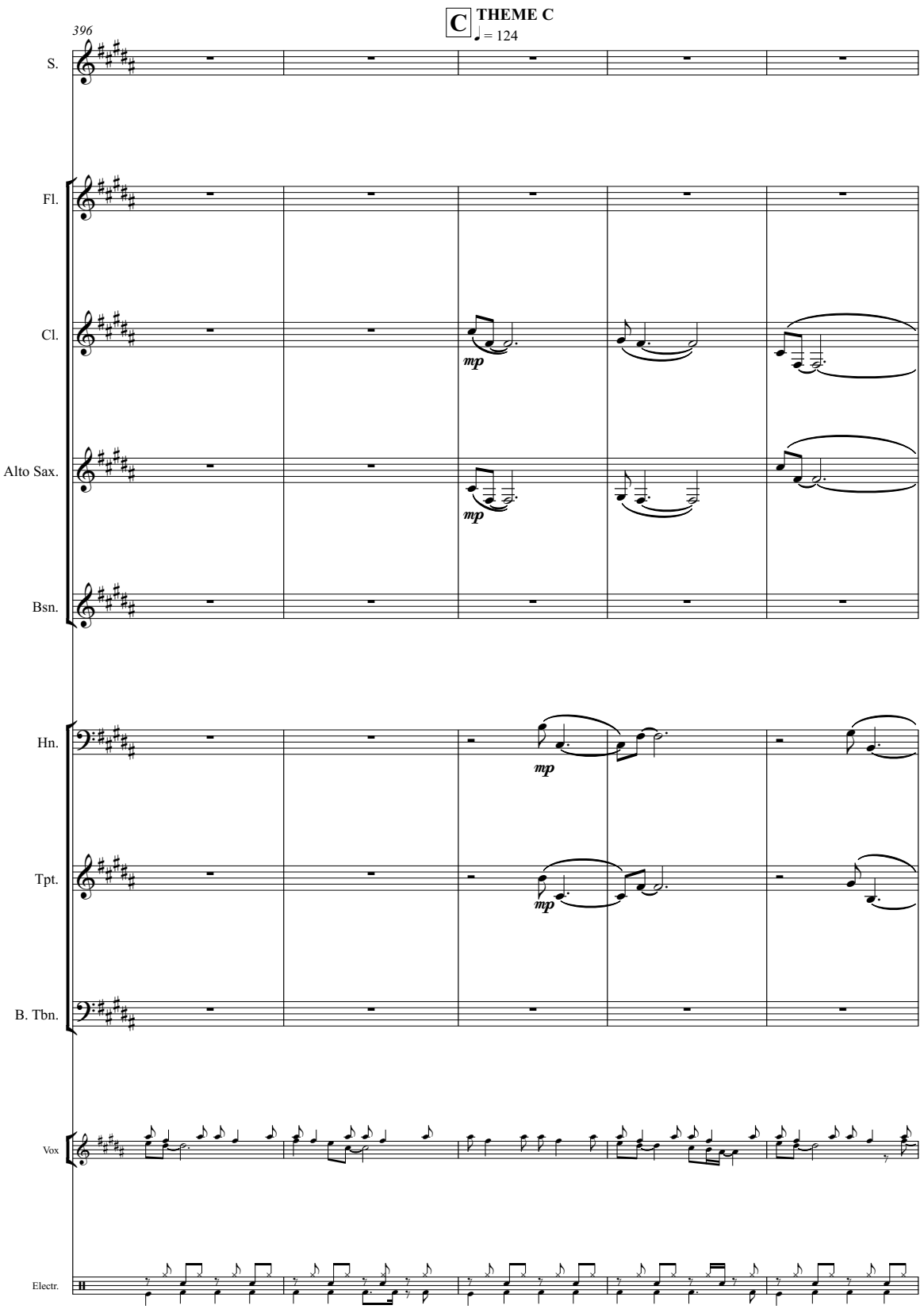

377
S.
Fl.
mp
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Electr.

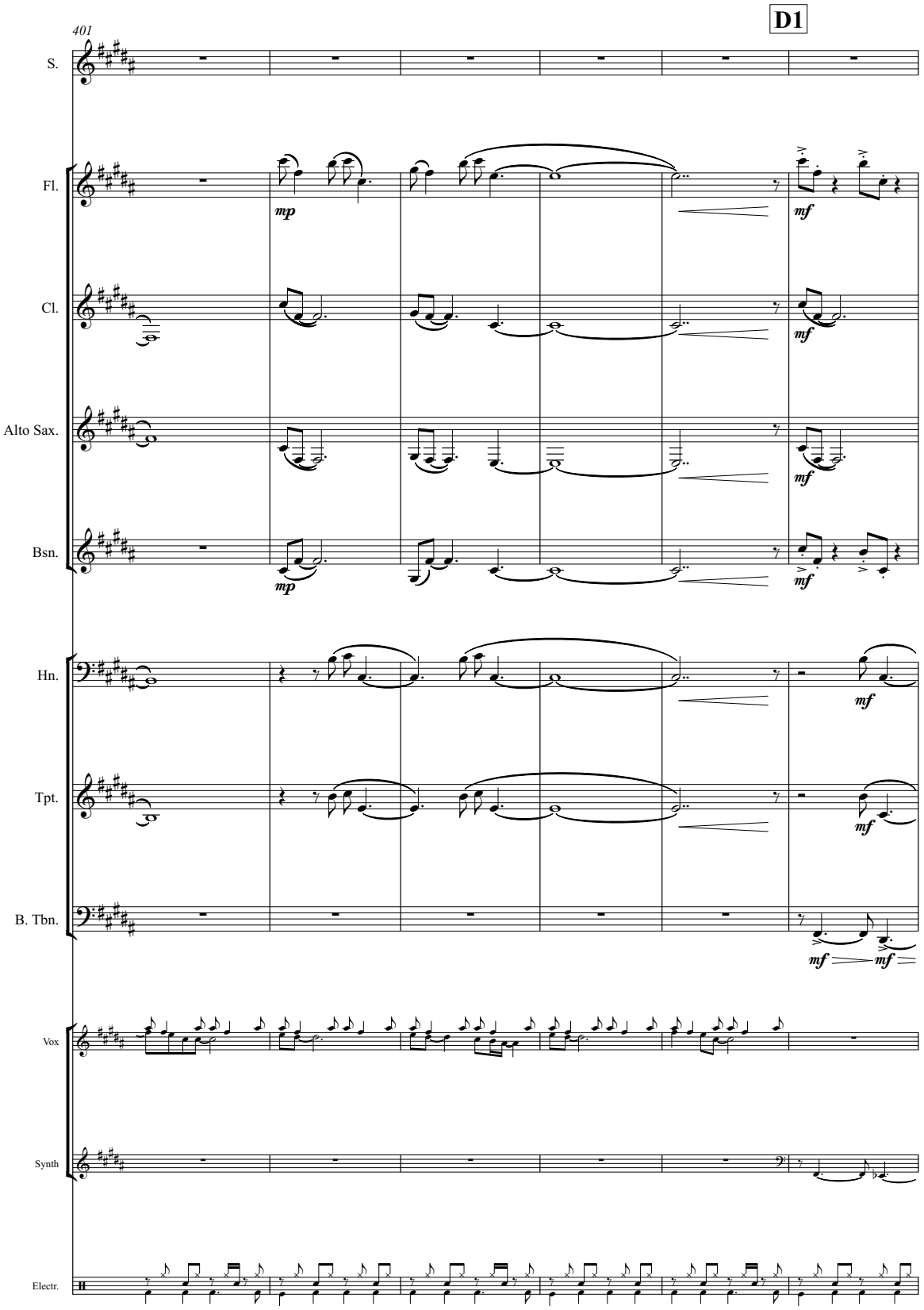

DD
380
S.
Improv:
Fl.
E♭m7
mp
Cl.
E♭m7
Improv:
Alto Sax.
E♭m7
mf
Bsn.
E♭m7
wah-wah quarter-notes
Hn.
wah-wah quarter-notes
Tpt.
wah-wah quarter-notes
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Electr.

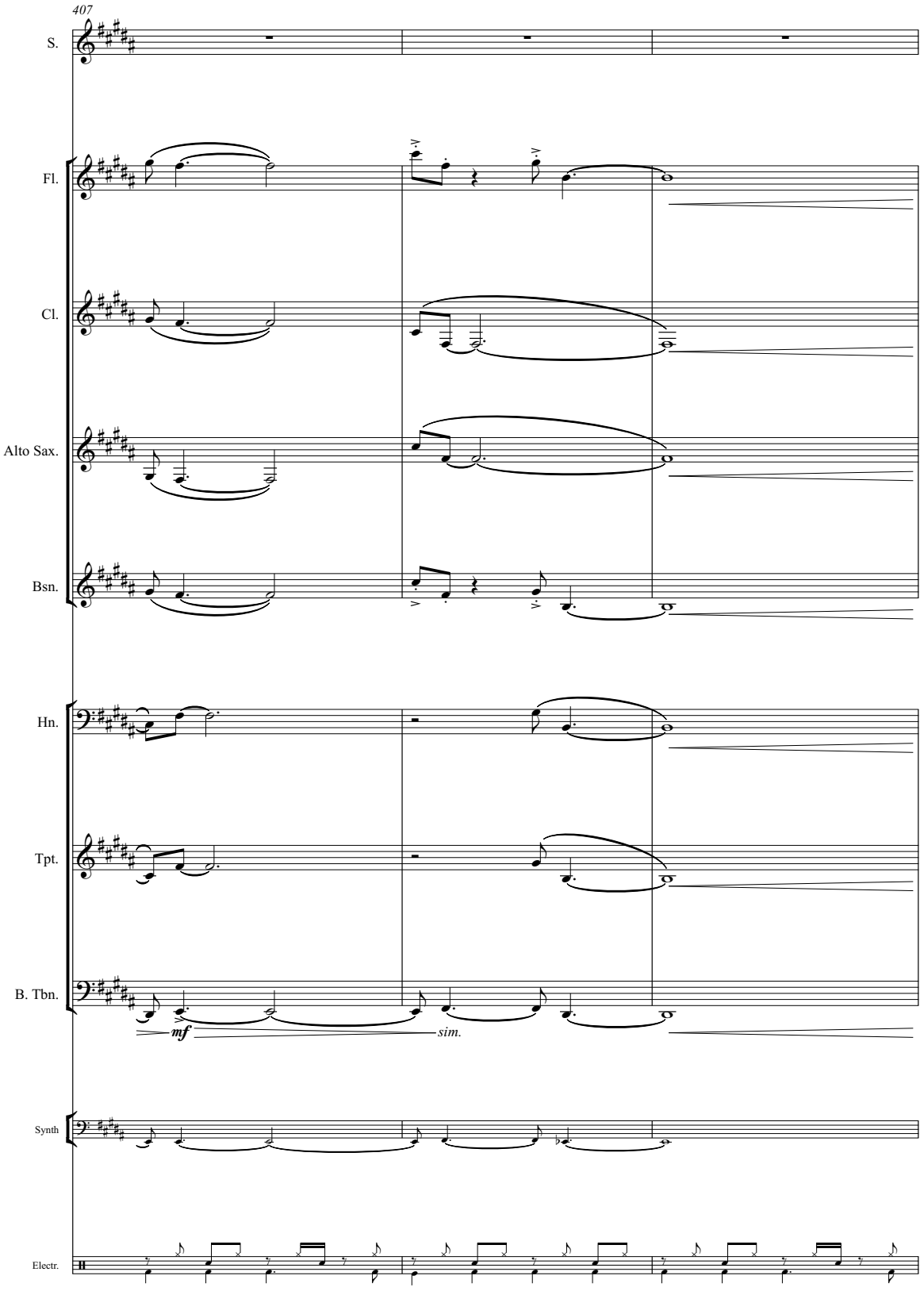

384
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Electr.

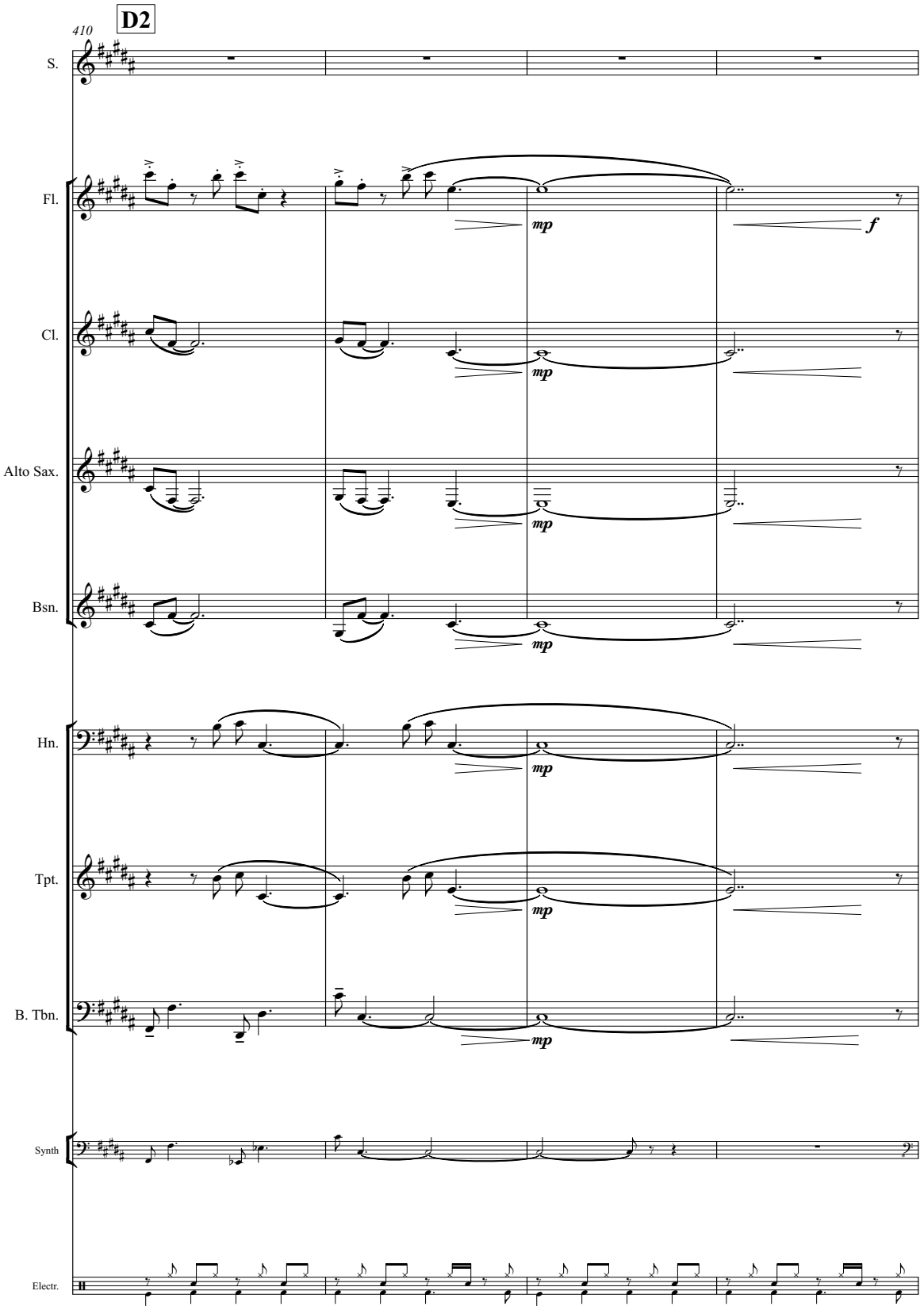

389
A
Solo Electronics:
approx. 5'
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.

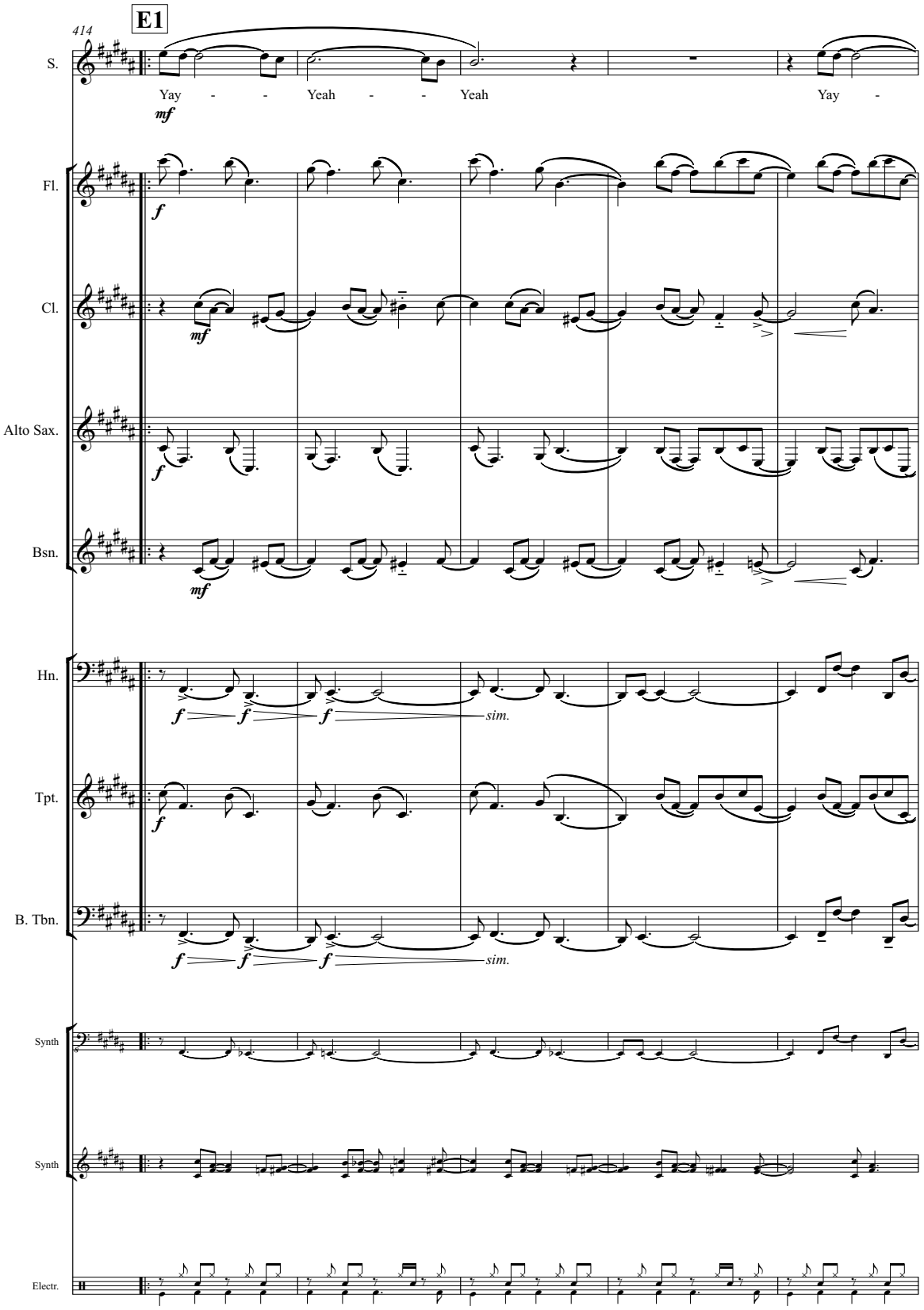

390
B
♩ = 124
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.

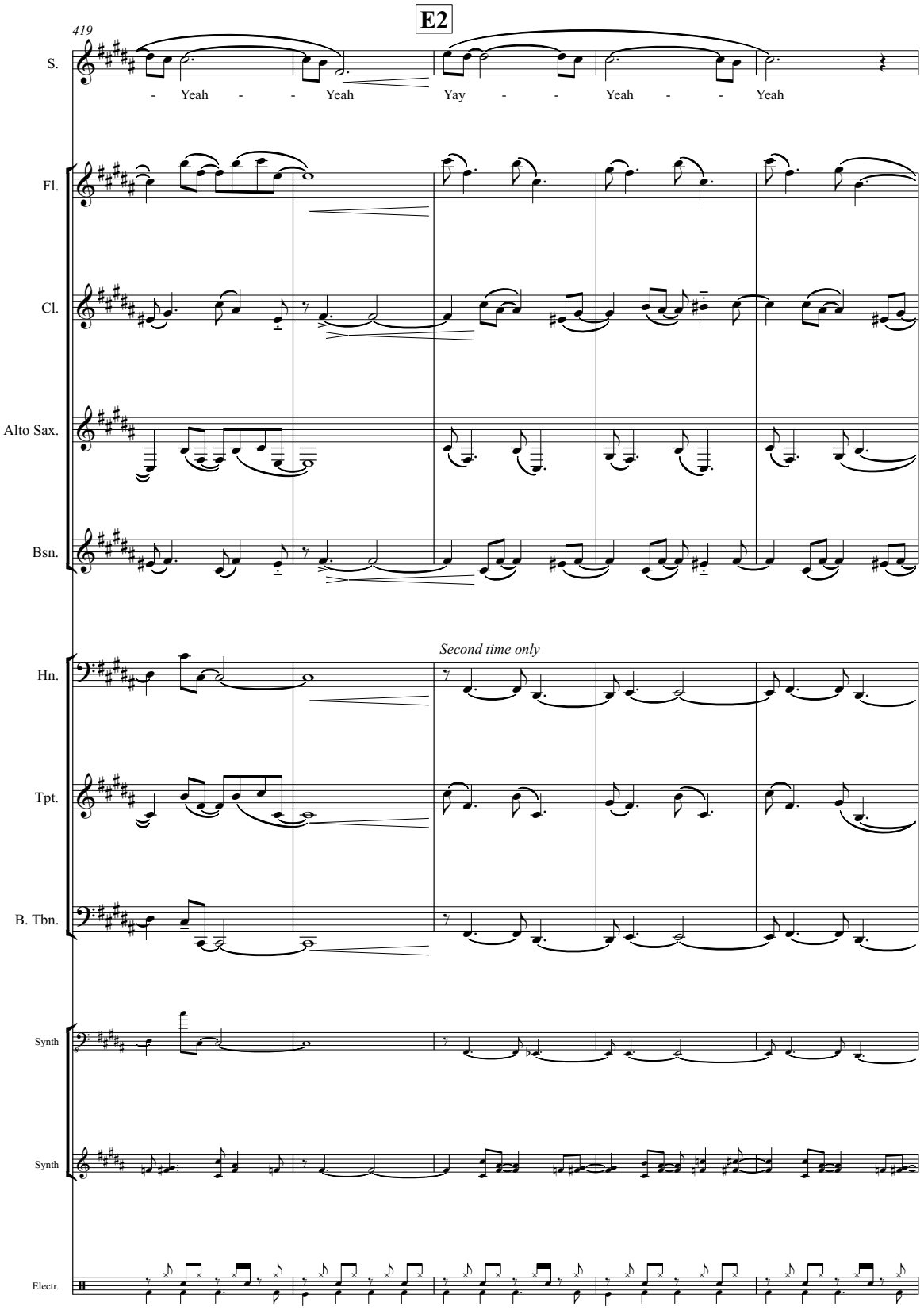

396
C
THEME C
♩ = 124
S.
Fl.
Cl.
mp
Alto Sax.
mp
Bsn.
Hn.
mp
Tpt.
mp
B. Tbn.
Vox
Electr.

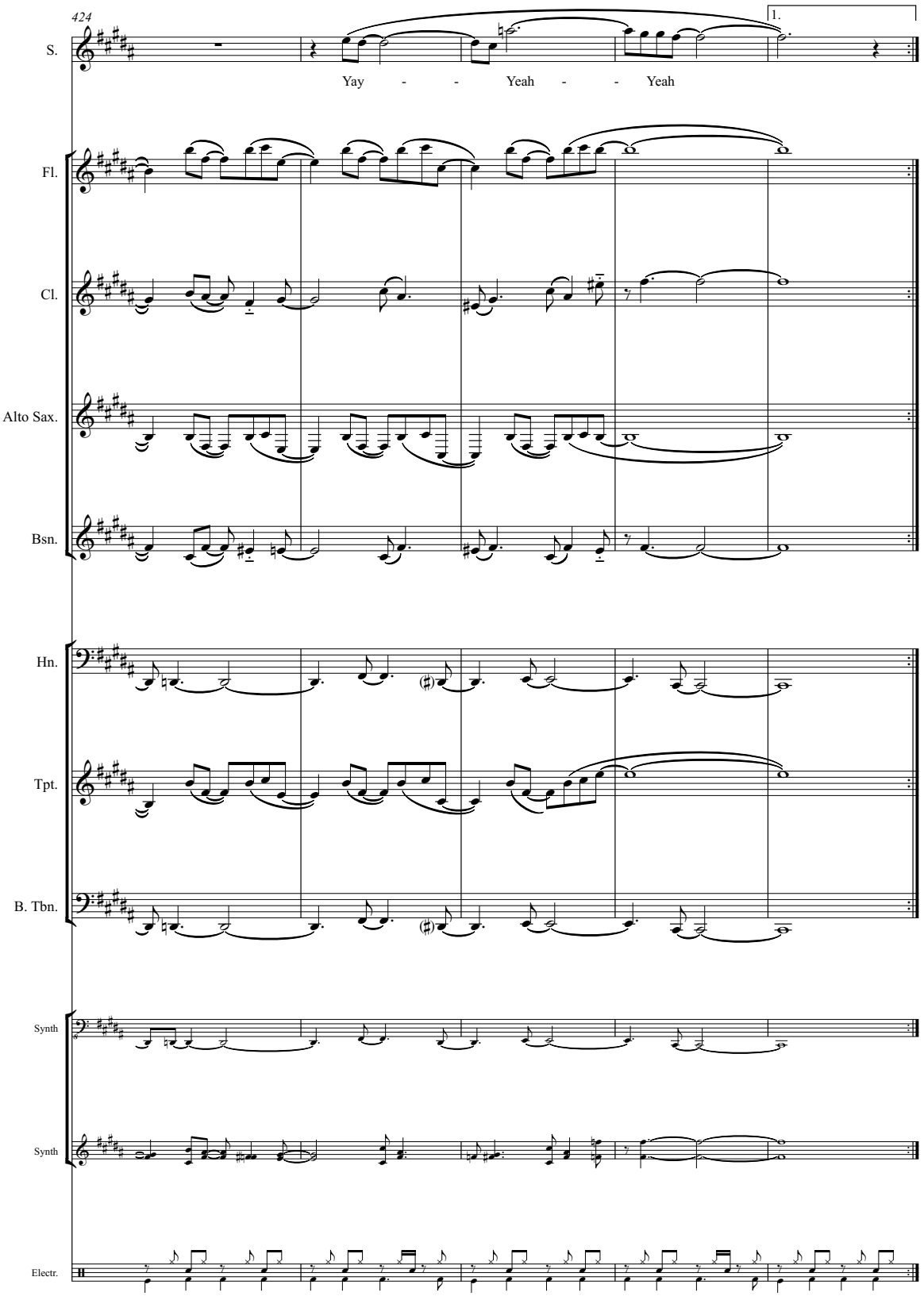

401
D1
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Vox
Synth
Electr.
mp
mf

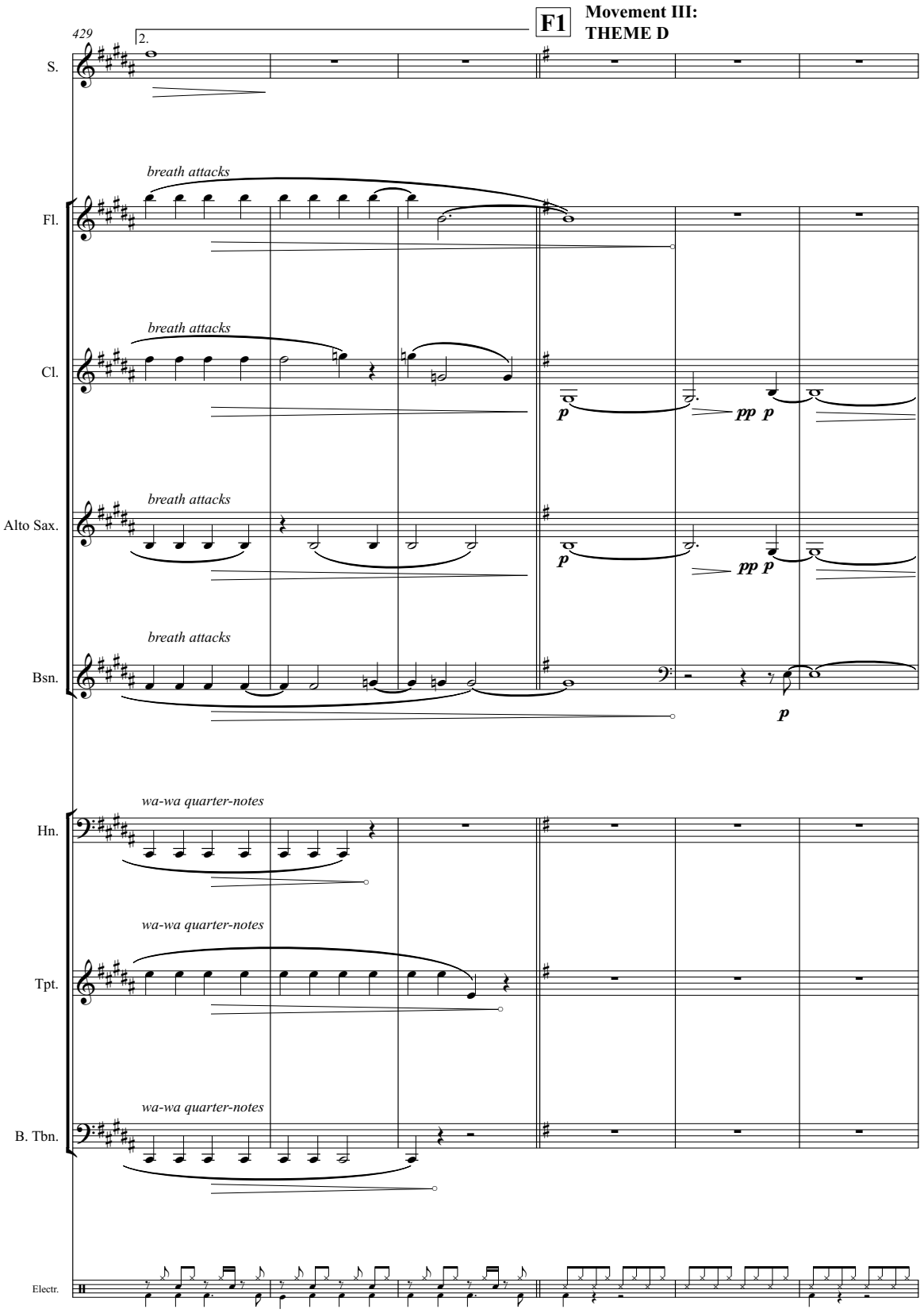

407
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
mf
sim.
Synth
Electr.

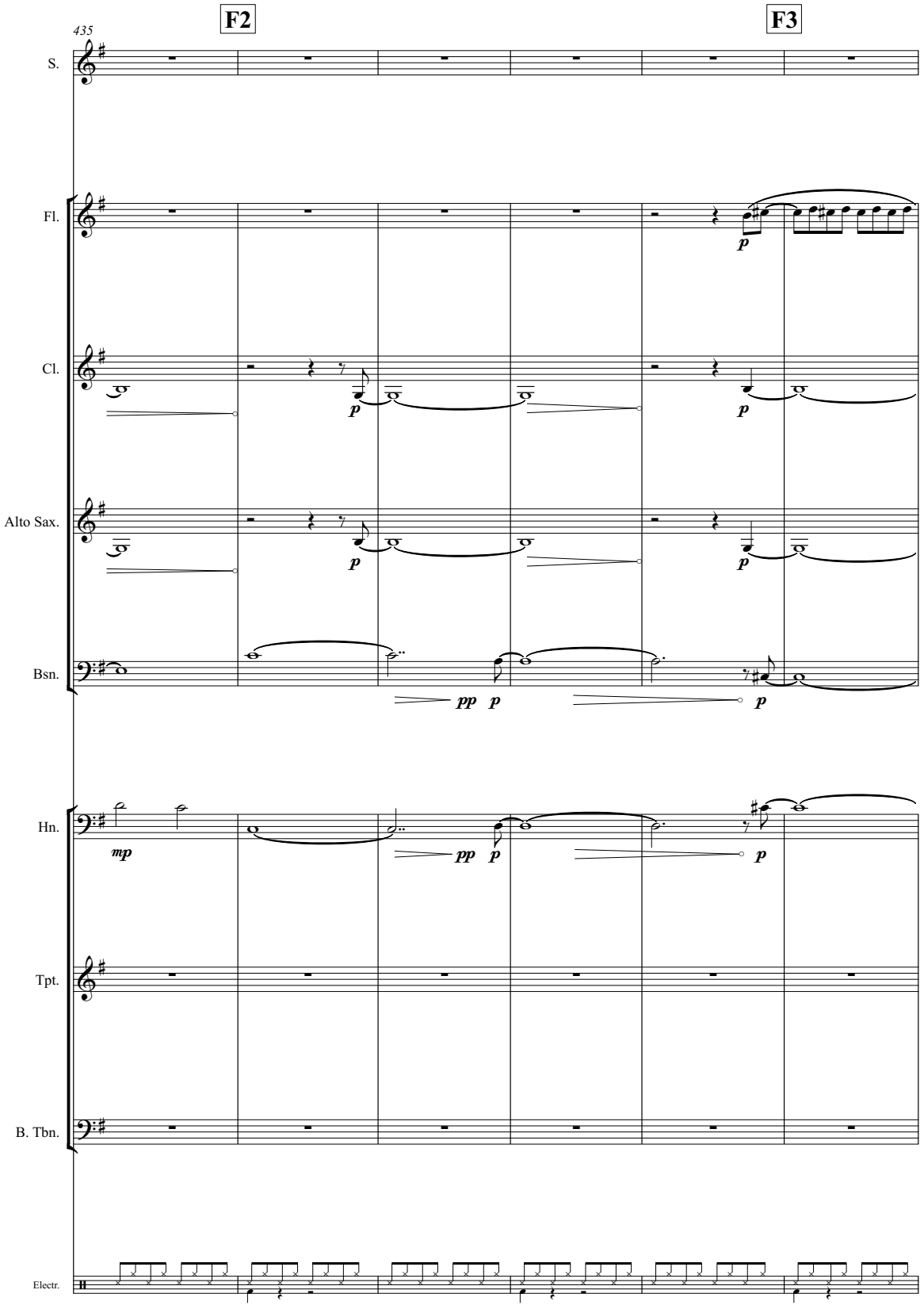

D2
410
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Synth
Electr.
mp
f

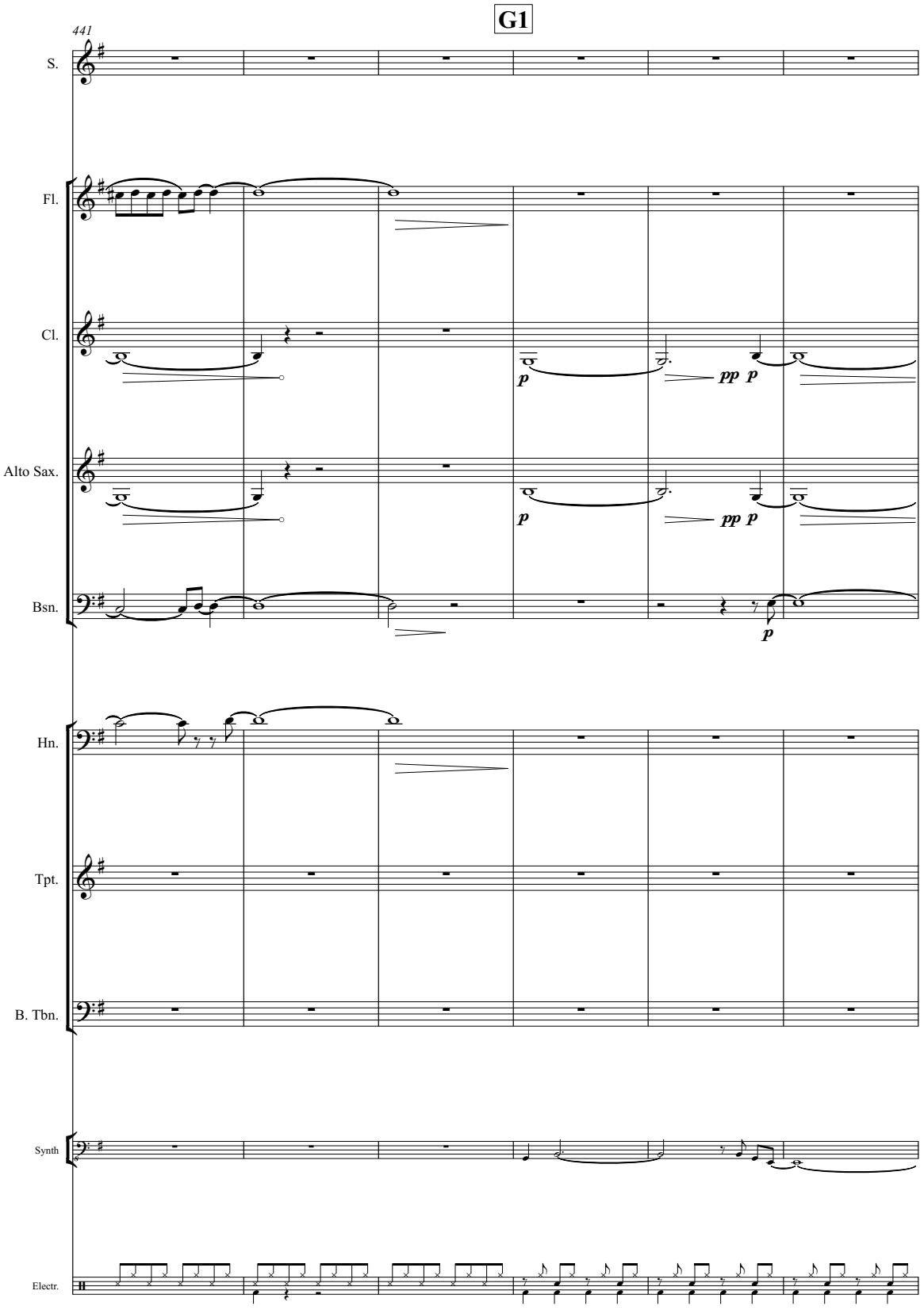

E1
414
S.
Yay - - Yeah - - Yeah Yay -
mf
Fl.
f
Cl.
mf
Alto Sax.
f
Bsn.
mf
Hn.
f f f sim.
Tpt.
f
B. Tbn.
f f f sim.
Synth
Synth
Electr.

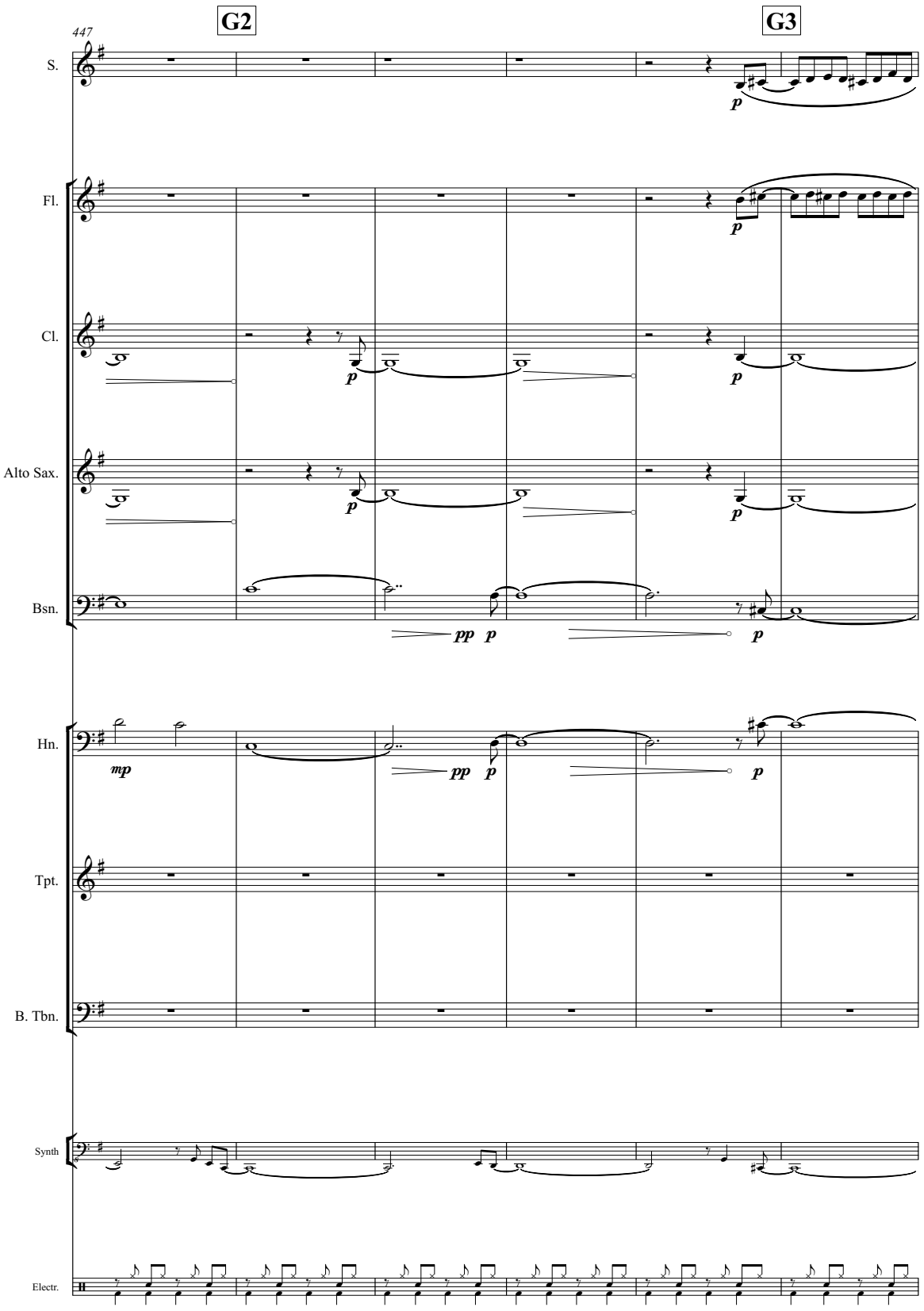

E2
419
S.
- Yeah - - Yeah
Yay - - Yeah - - Yeah
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Second time only
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Synth
Synth
Electr.

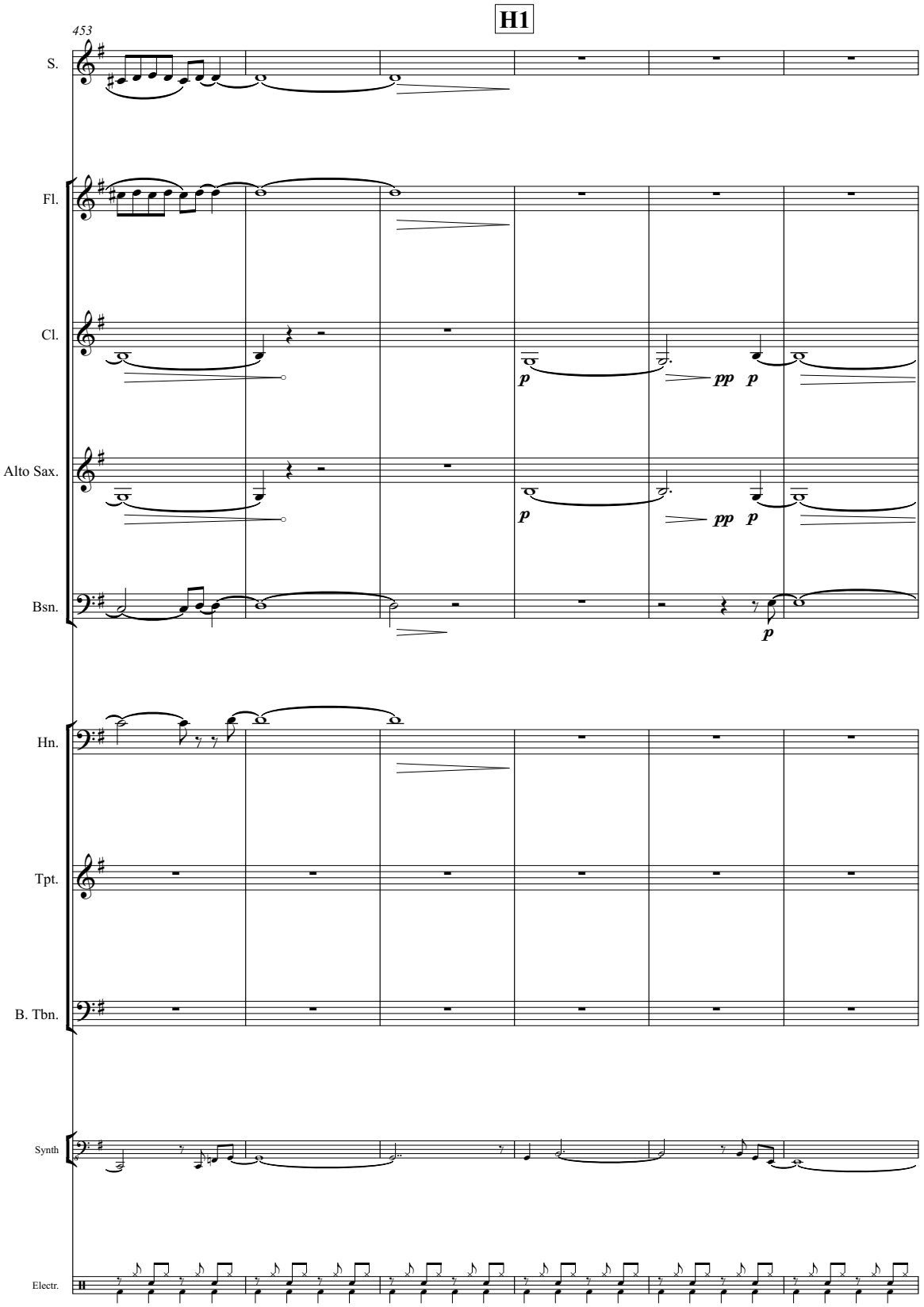

424
1.
S.
Yay - - Yeah - - Yeah
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Synth
Synth
Electr.

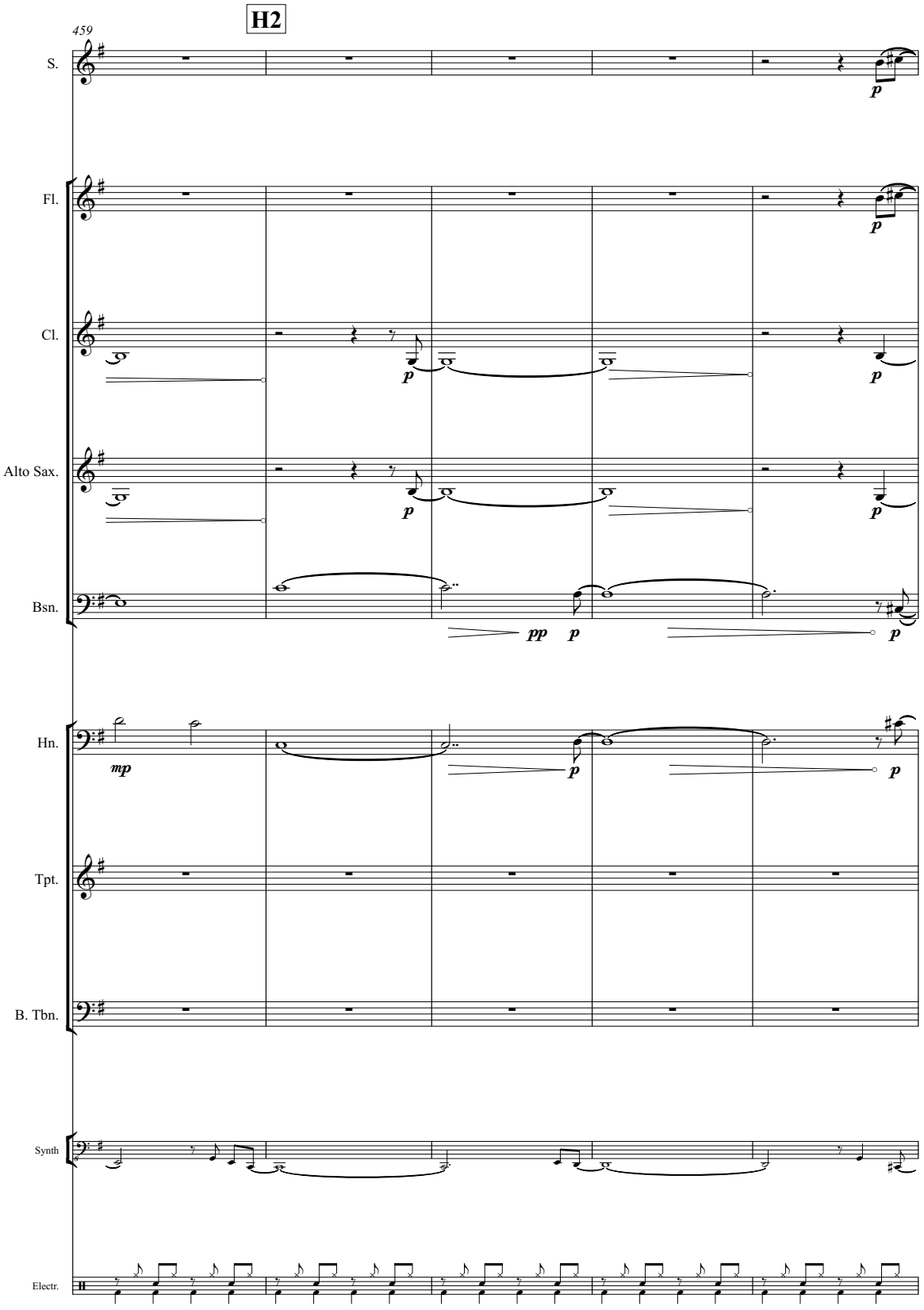

F1
Movement III:
THEME D
429
2.
S.
breath attacks
Fl.
breath attacks
Cl.
p
pp p
breath attacks
Alto Sax.
p
pp p
breath attacks
Bsn.
p
wa-wa quarter-notes
Hn.
wa-wa quarter-notes
Tpt.
wa-wa quarter-notes
B. Tbn.
Electr.

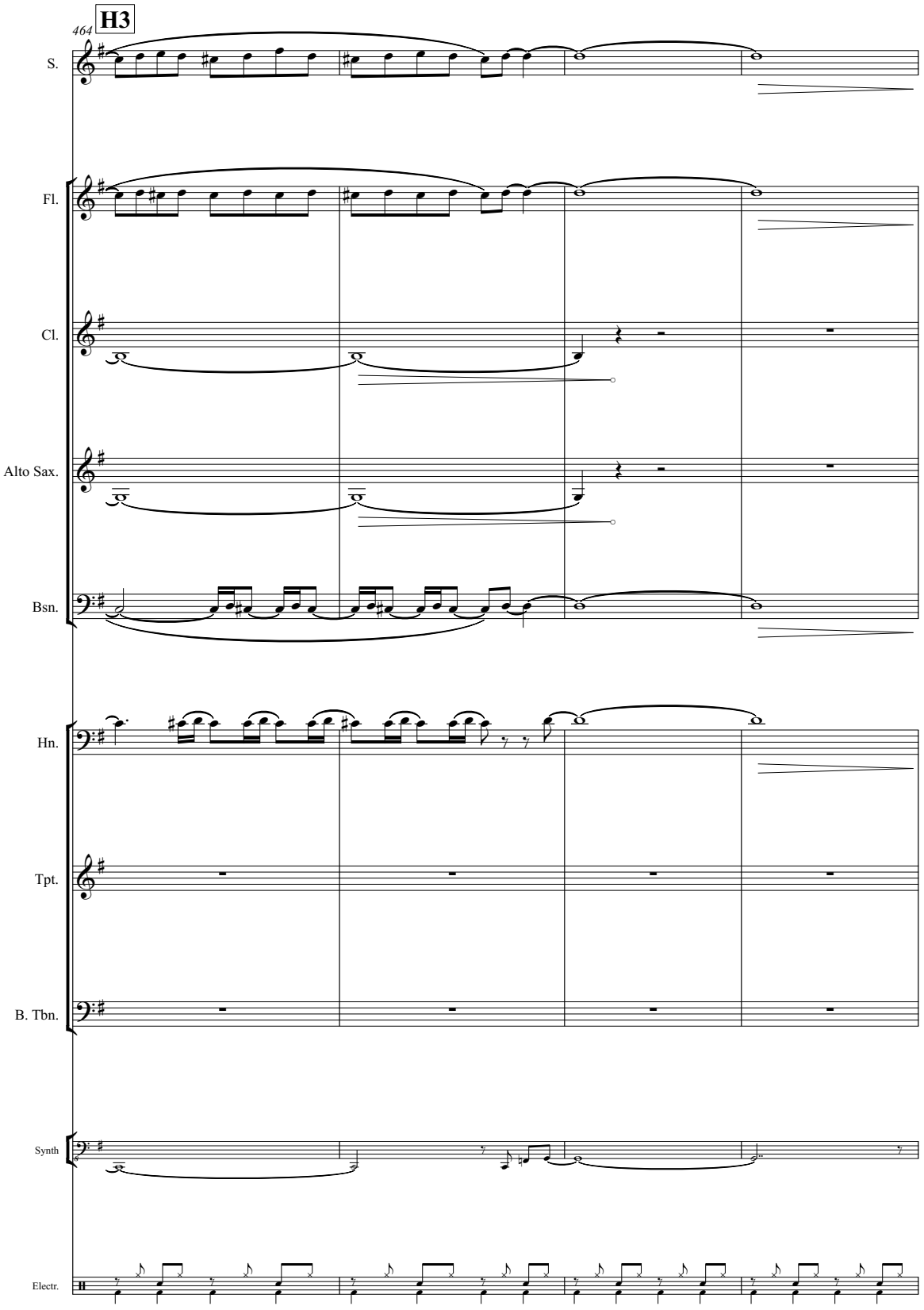

F2
F3
435
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Electr.
mp
pp
p

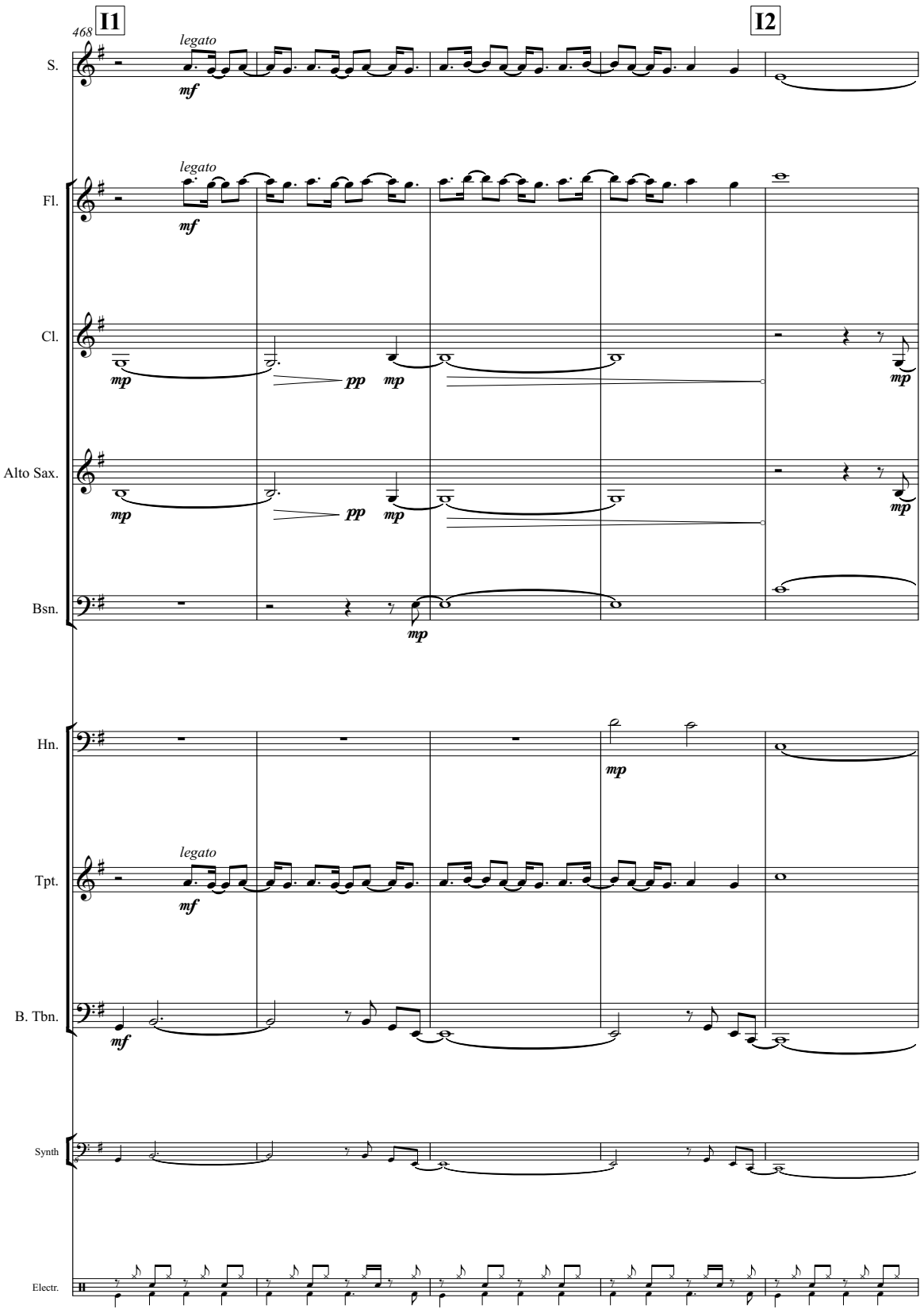

G1
441
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Synth
Electr.
p
pp p
p
pp p
p

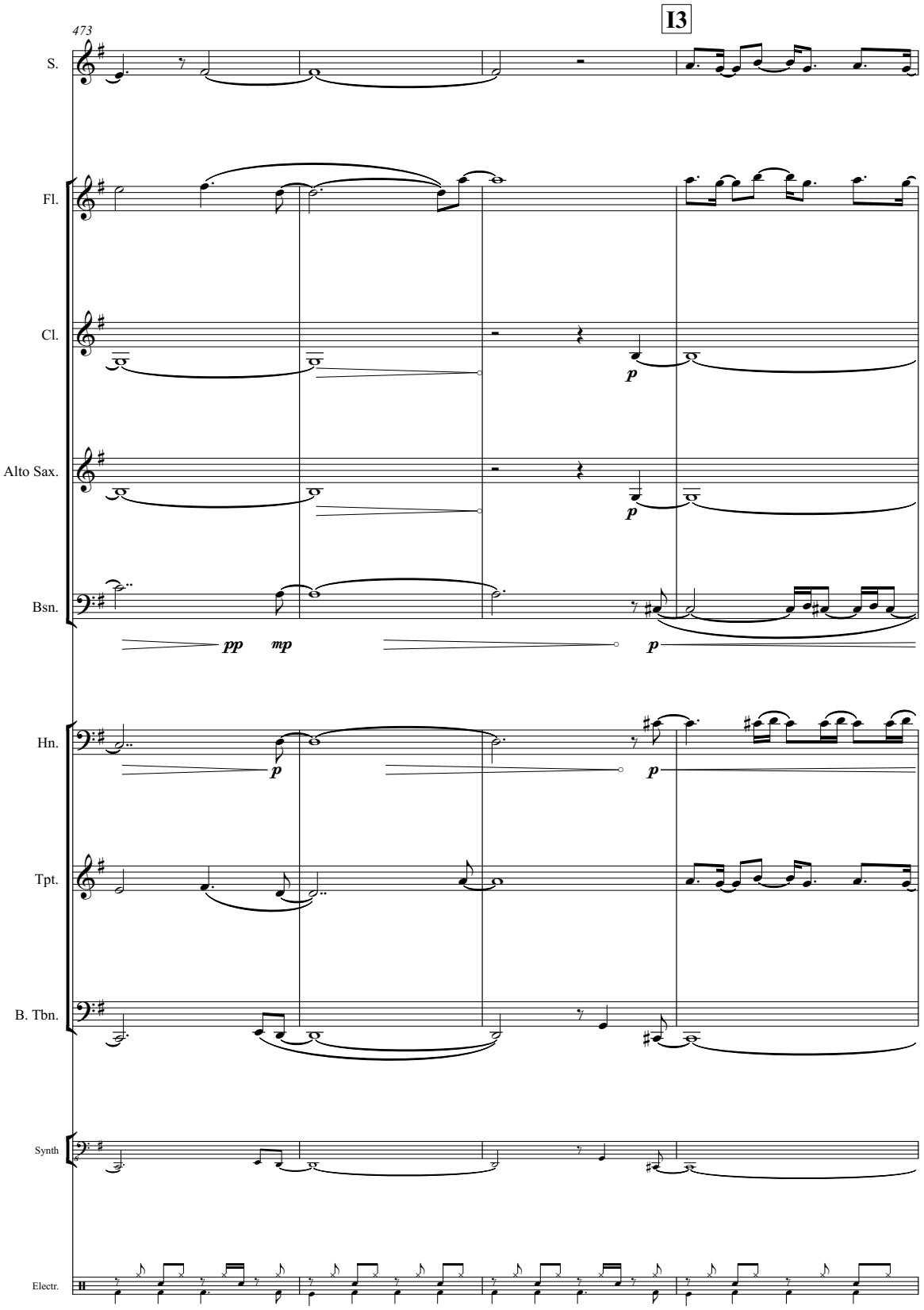

G2
G3
447
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Synth
Electr.
p
pp
mp

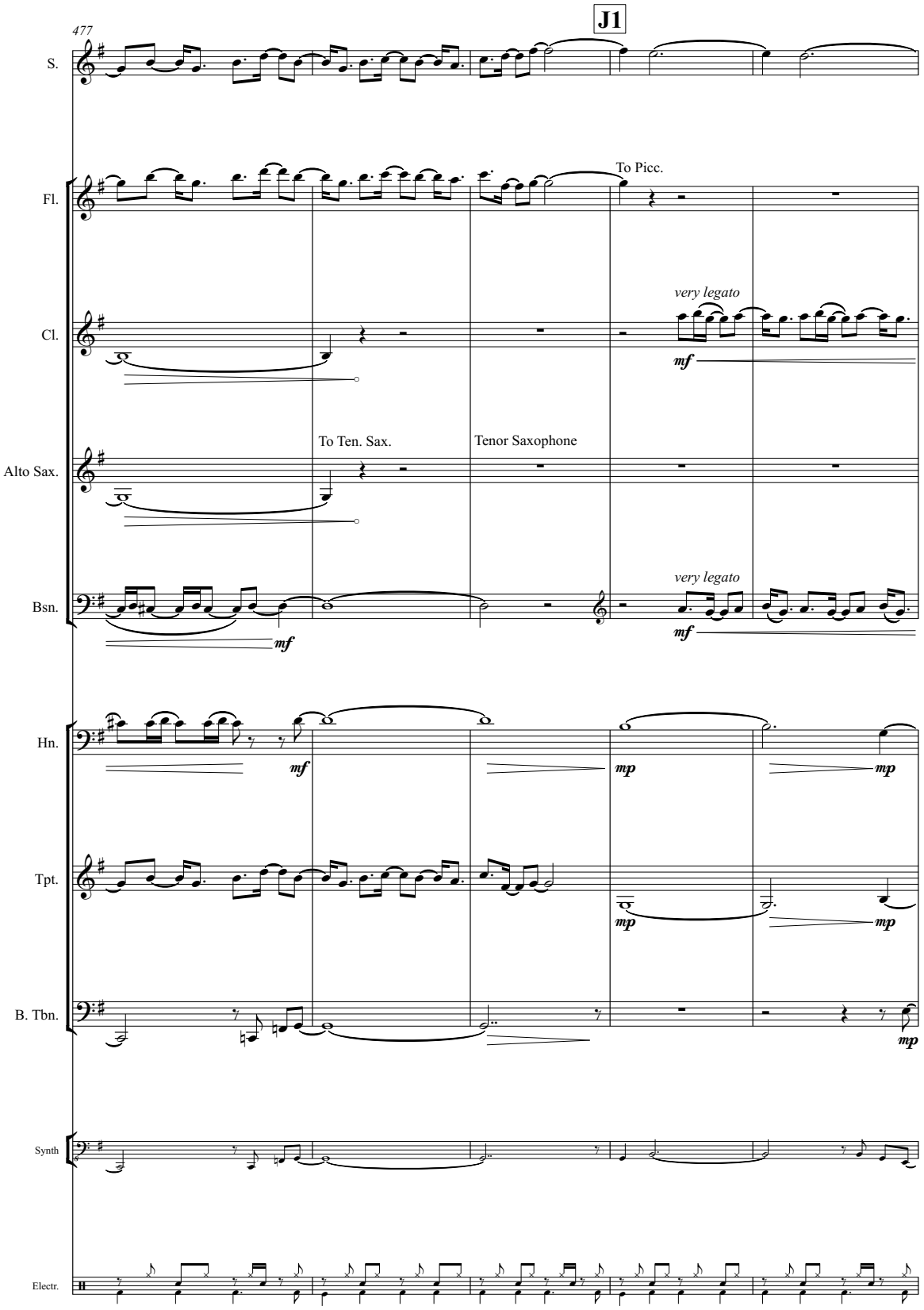

H1
453
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Synth
Electr.
p
pp
p
p
pp
p
p

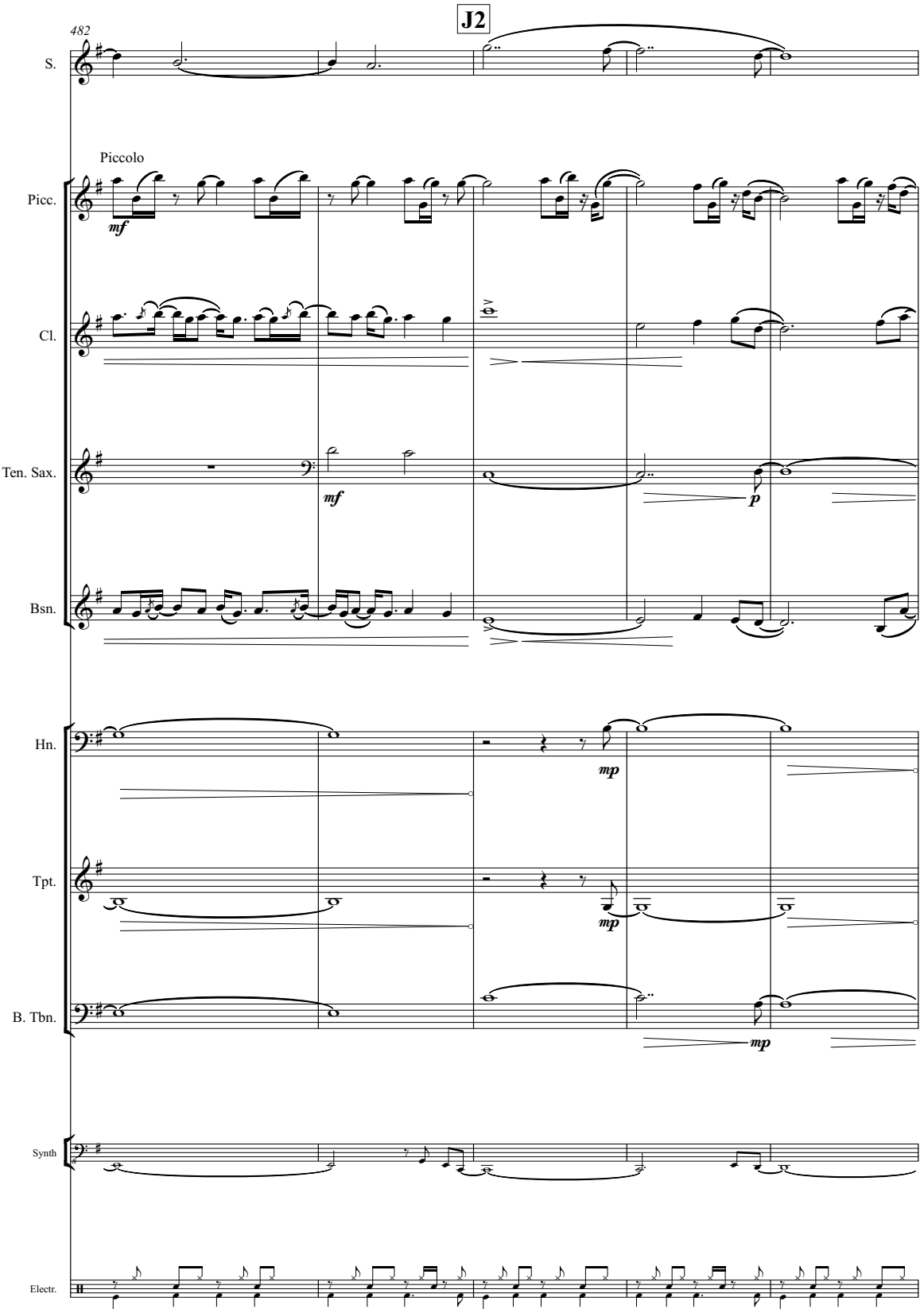

H2
459
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Synth
Electr.
p
pp
mp

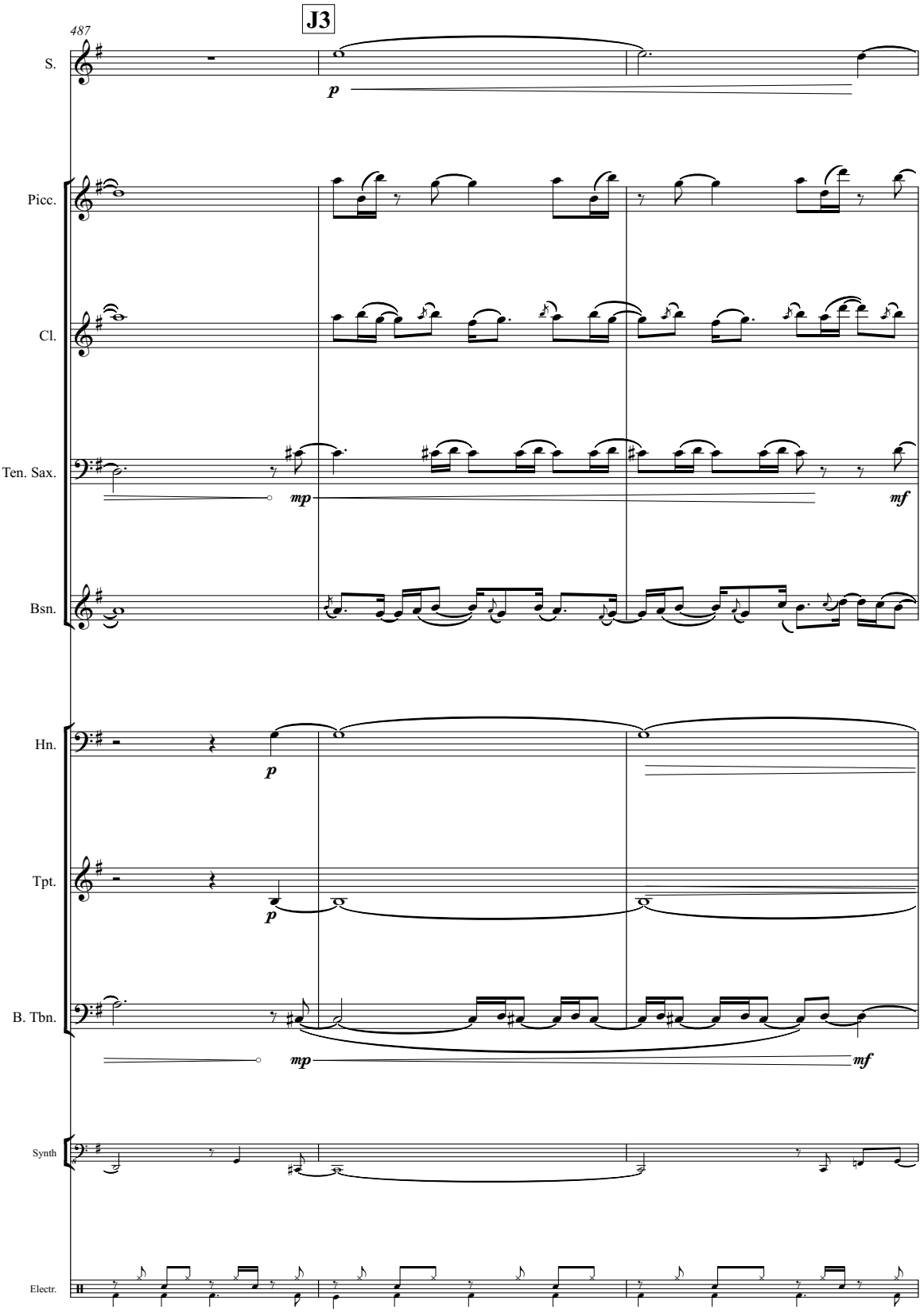

464
H3
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Synth
Electr.

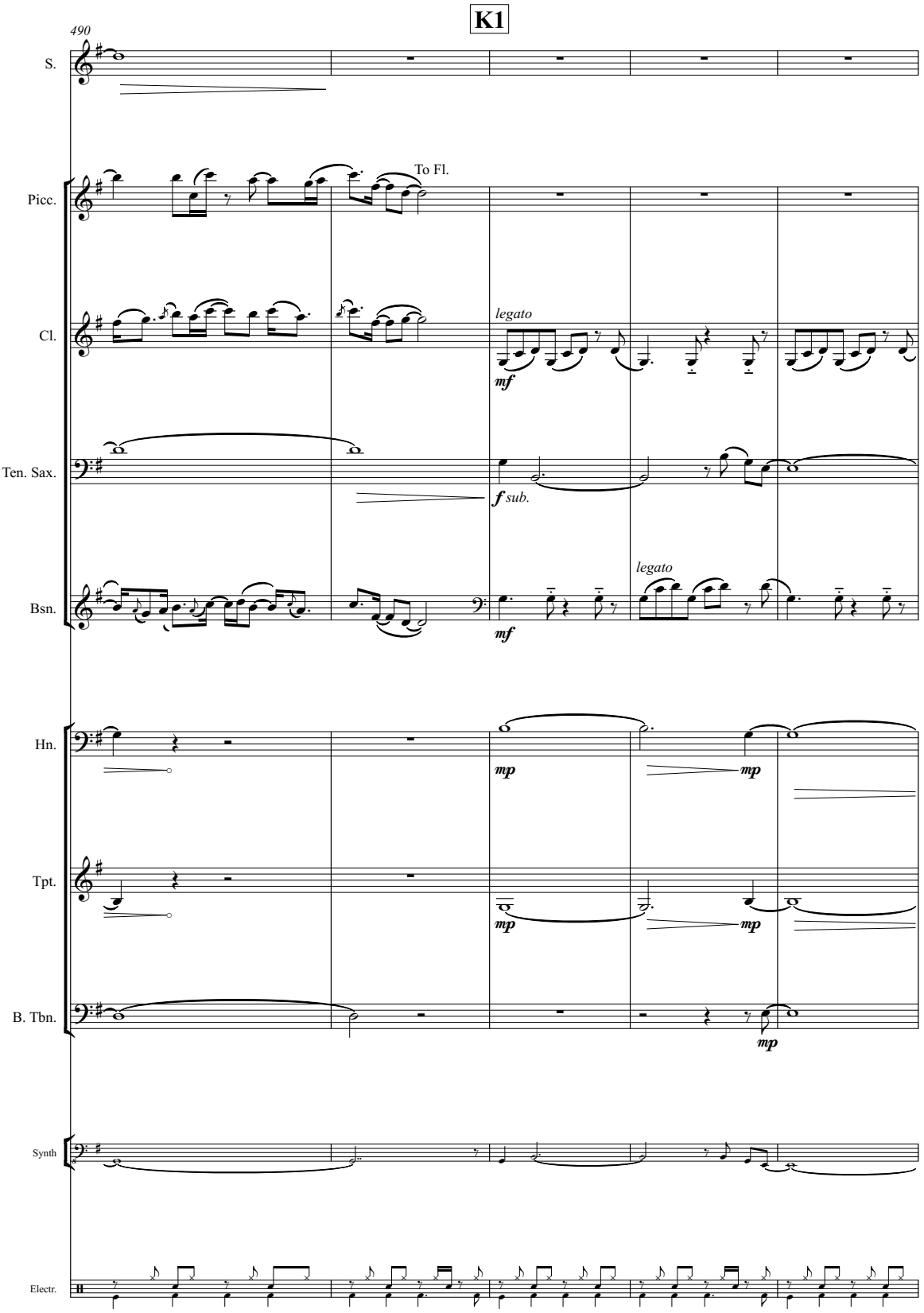

468
I1
I2
S.
legato
mf
Fl.
legato
mf
Cl.
mp
pp
mp
mp
Alto Sax.
mp
pp
mp
mp
Bsn.
mp
Hn.
mp
Tpt.
legato
mf
B. Tbn.
mf
Synth
Electr.

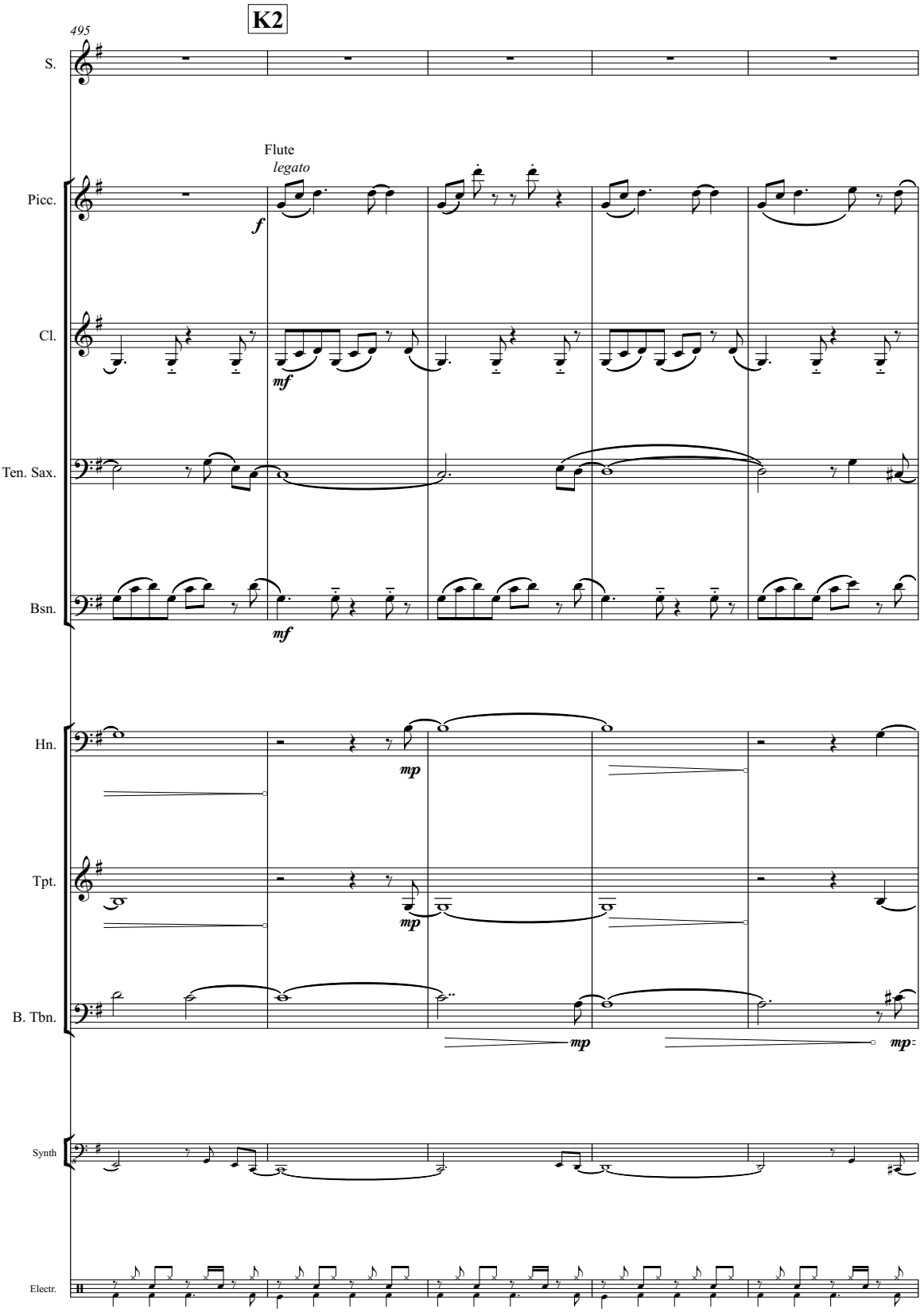

I3
473
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Alto Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Synth
Electr.
pp
mp
p
p
p
p

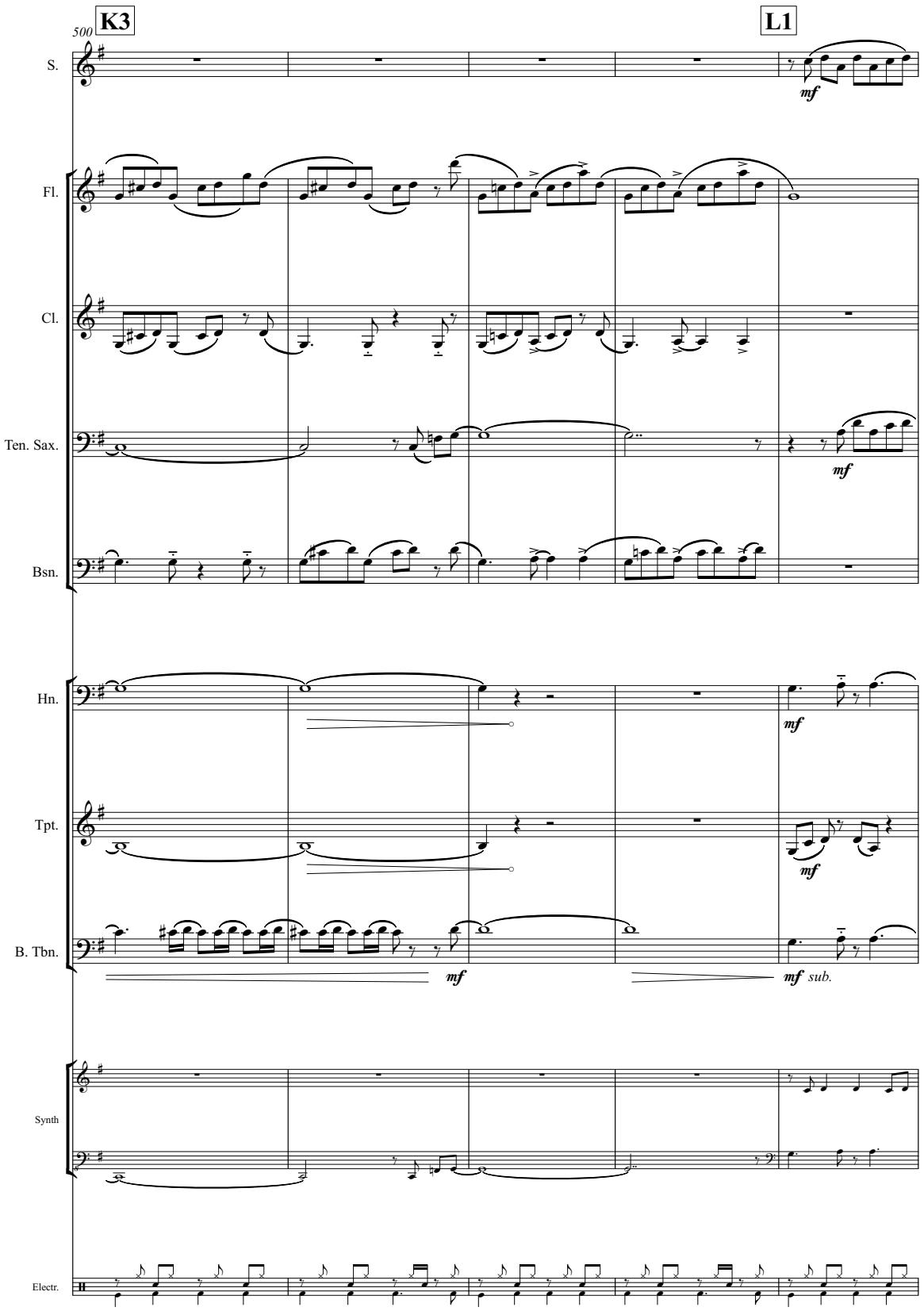

477
J1
S.
Fl.
To Picc.
Cl.
very legato
mf
Alto Sax.
To Ten. Sax.
Tenor Saxophone
Bsn.
very legato
mf
mf
Hn.
mf
mp
mp
Tpt.
mp
mp
B. Tbn.
mp
Synth
Electr.

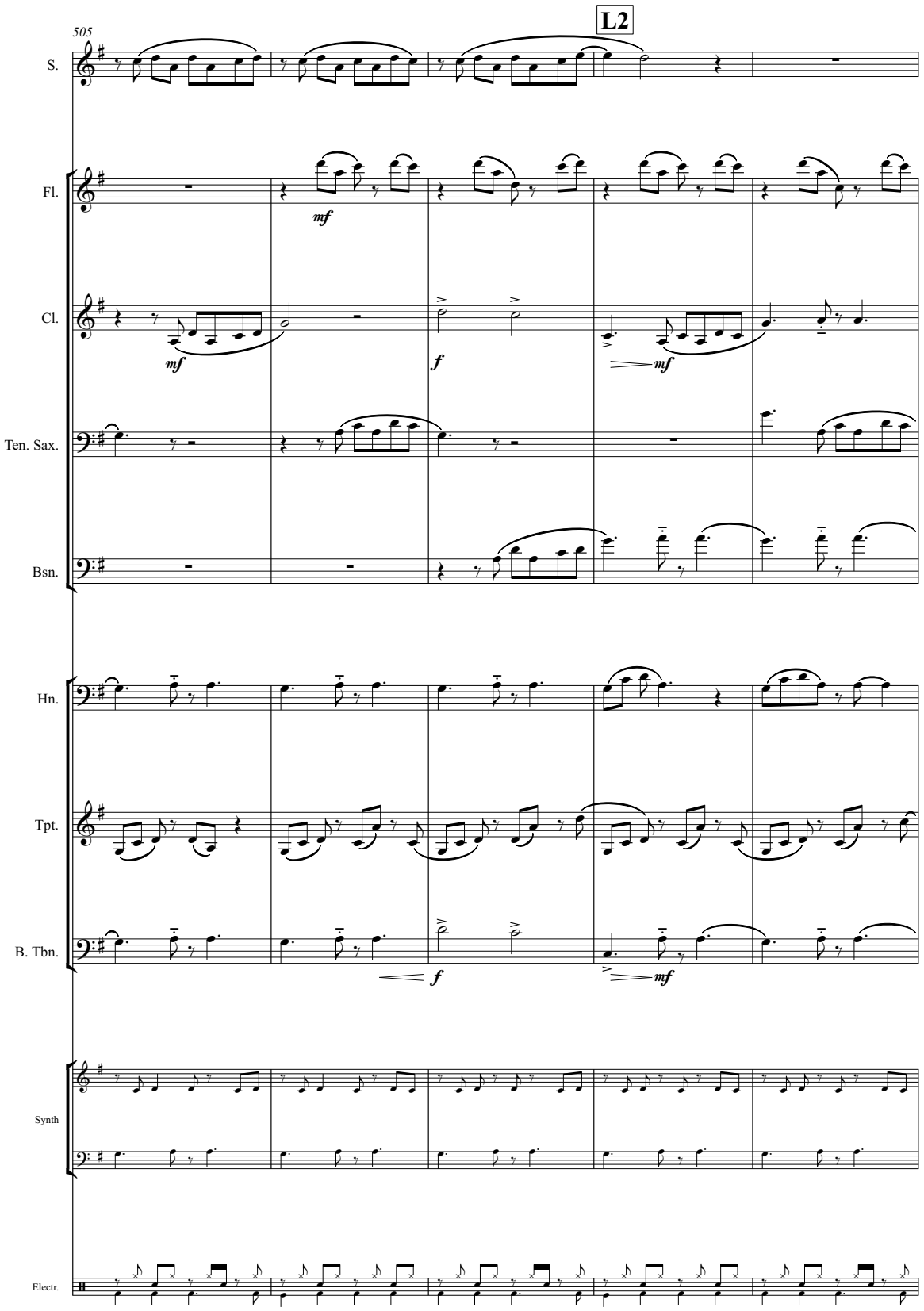

J2
482
S.
Piccolo
Picc.
mf
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
mf
p
Bsn.
Hn.
mp
Tpt.
mp
B. Tbn.
mp
Synth
Electr.

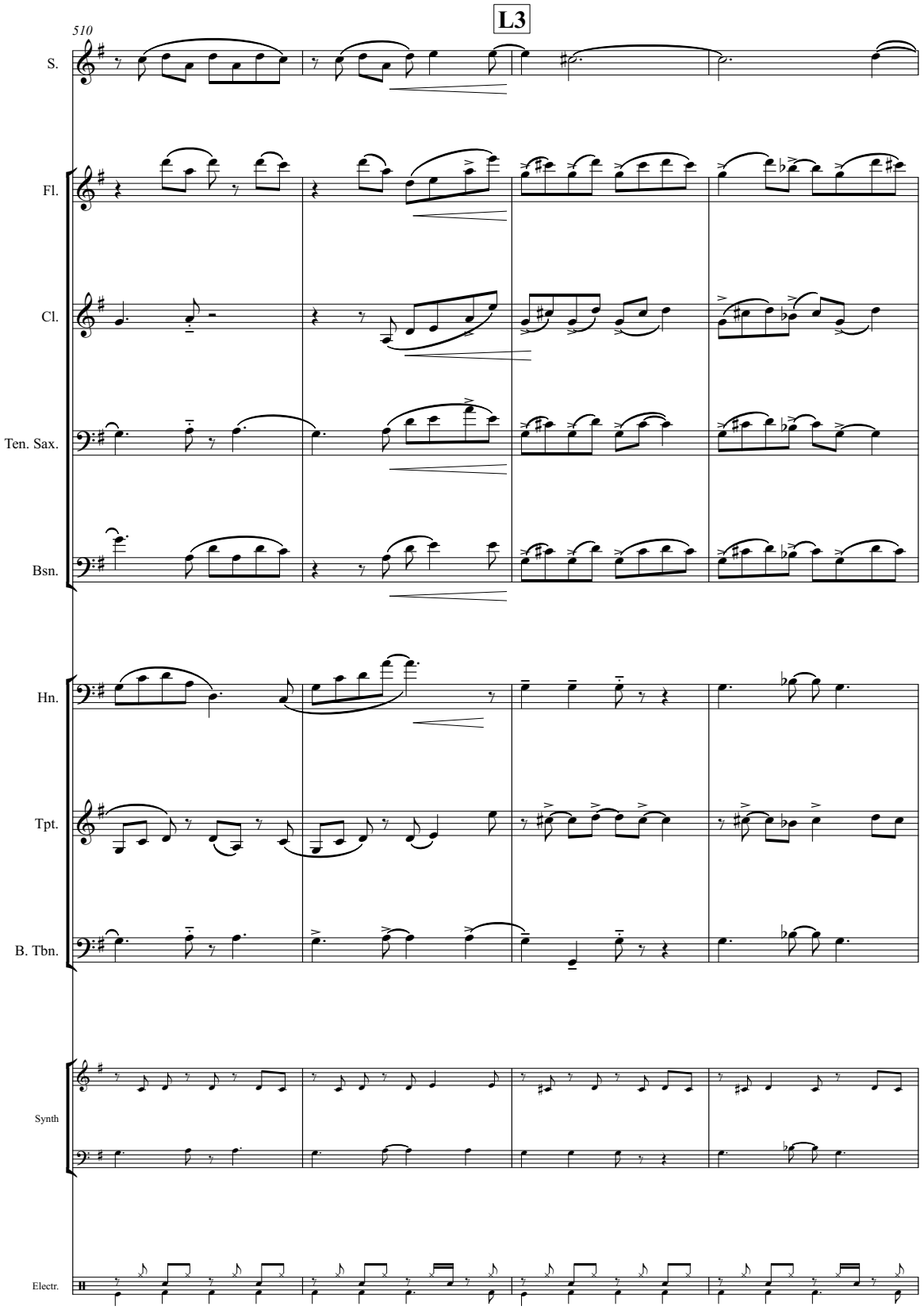

J3
487
S.
Picc.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Synth
Electr.
p
mp
mf

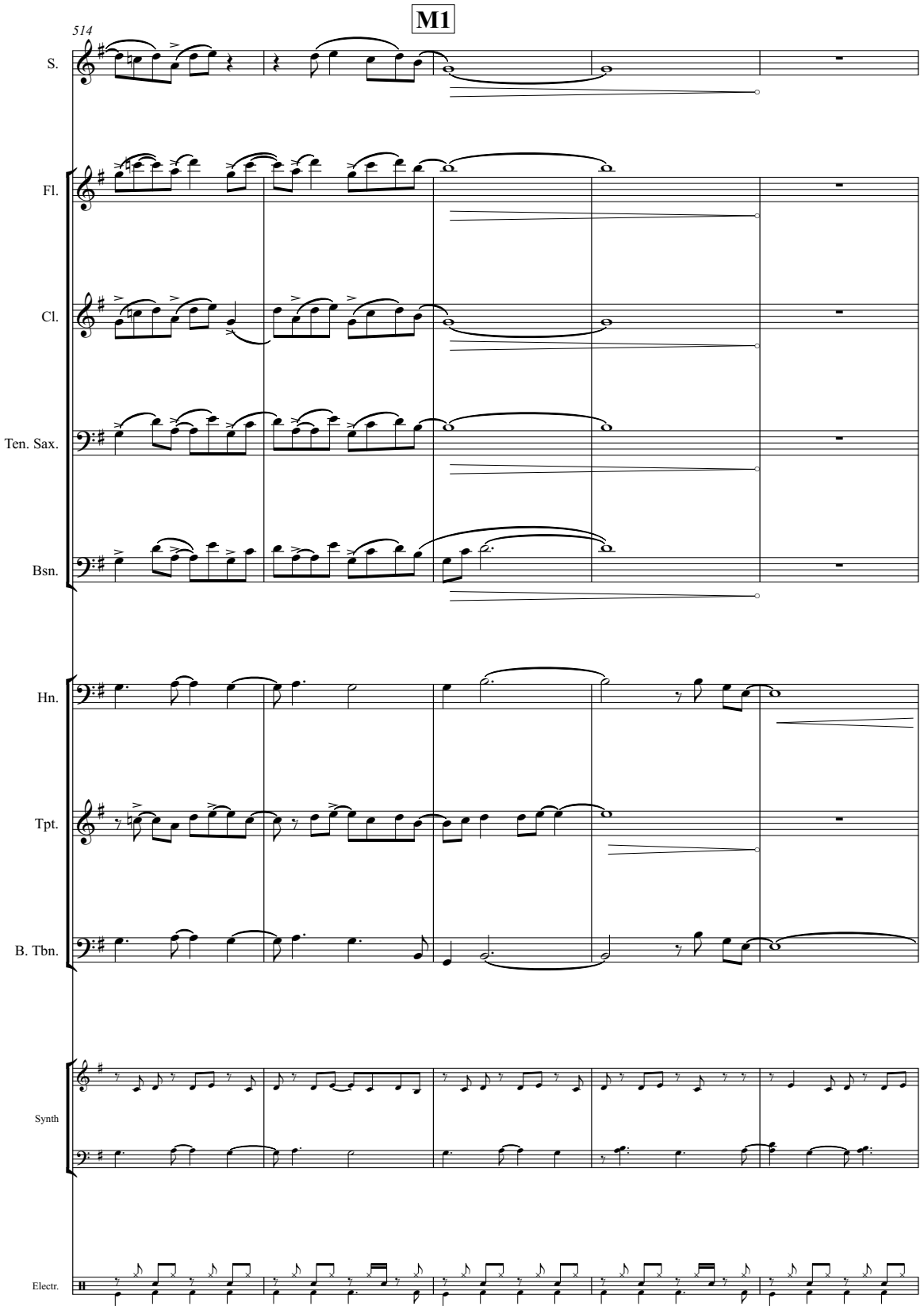

K1
490
S.
Picc.
To Fl.
Cl.
legato
mf
Ten. Sax.
f sub.
Bsn.
legato
mf
Hn.
mp
mp
Tpt.
mp
mp
B. Tbn.
mp
Synth
Electr.

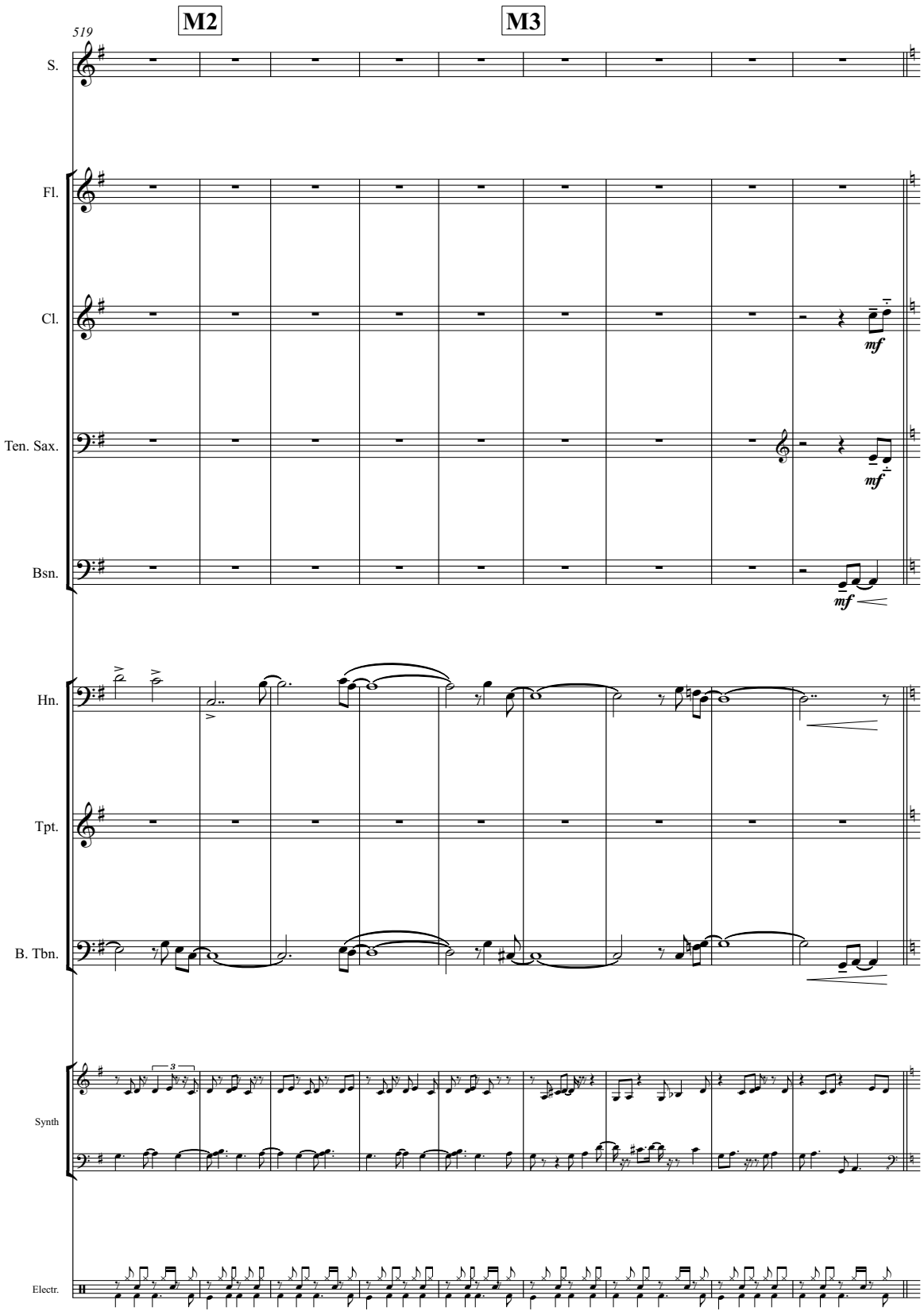

K2
495
S.
Flute
legato
Picc.
f
Cl.
mf
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
mf
Hn.
mp
Tpt.
mp
B. Tbn.
mp
mp
Synth
Electr.

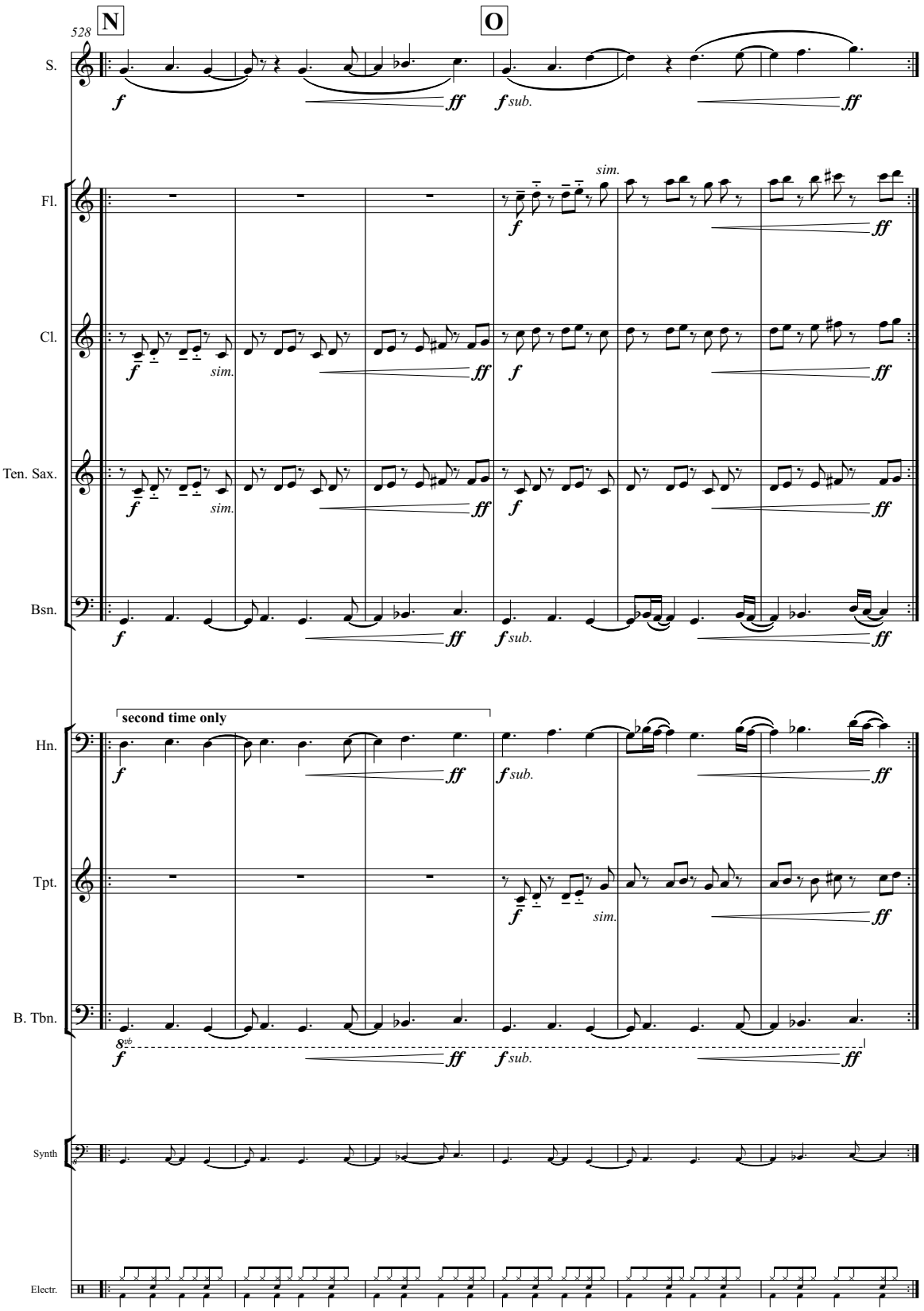

500
K3
L1
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Synth
Electr.
mf
mf
mf
mf
mf
mf sub.

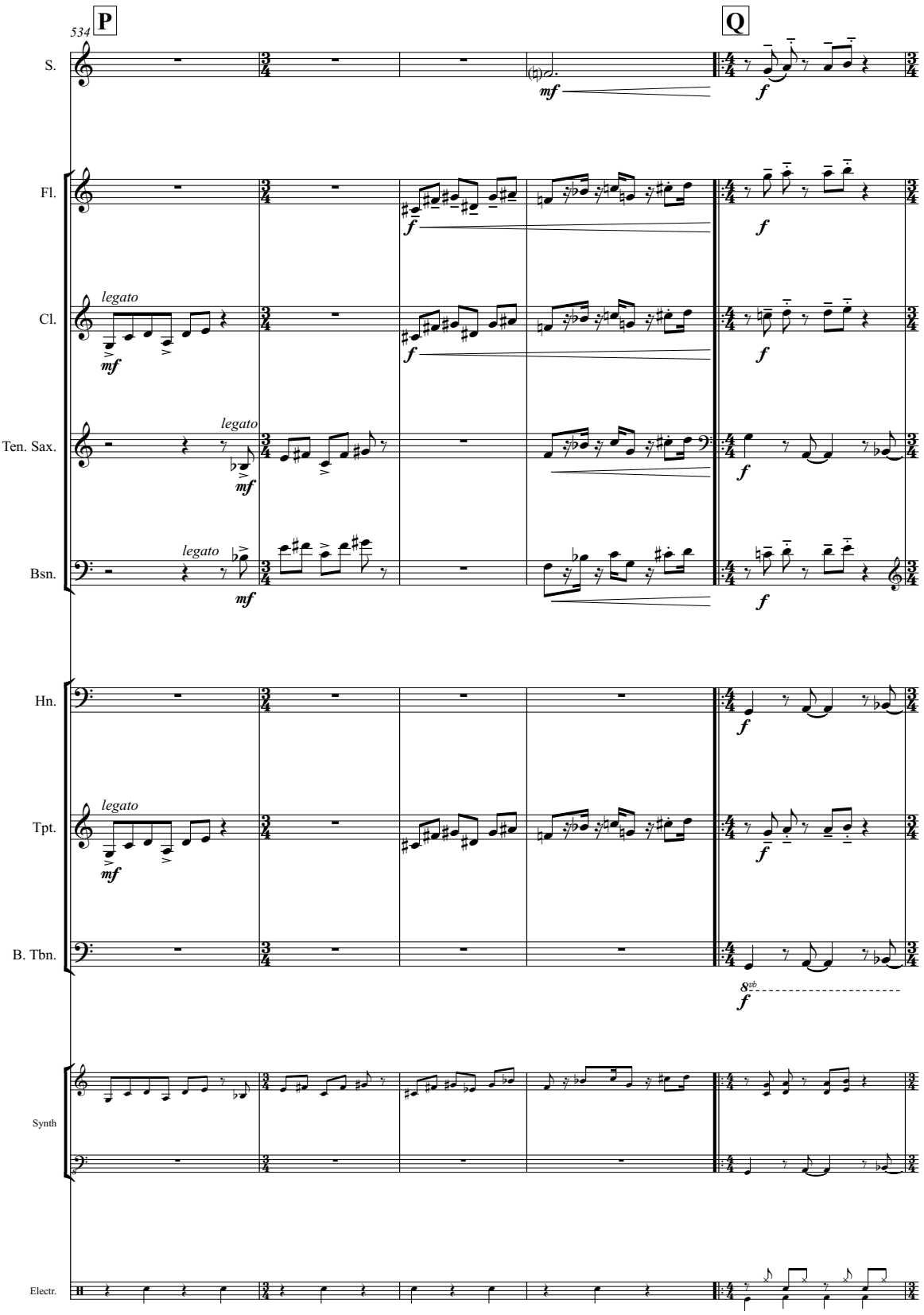

505
L2
S.
Fl.
mf
Cl.
mf
f
mf
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
f
mf
Synth
Electr.

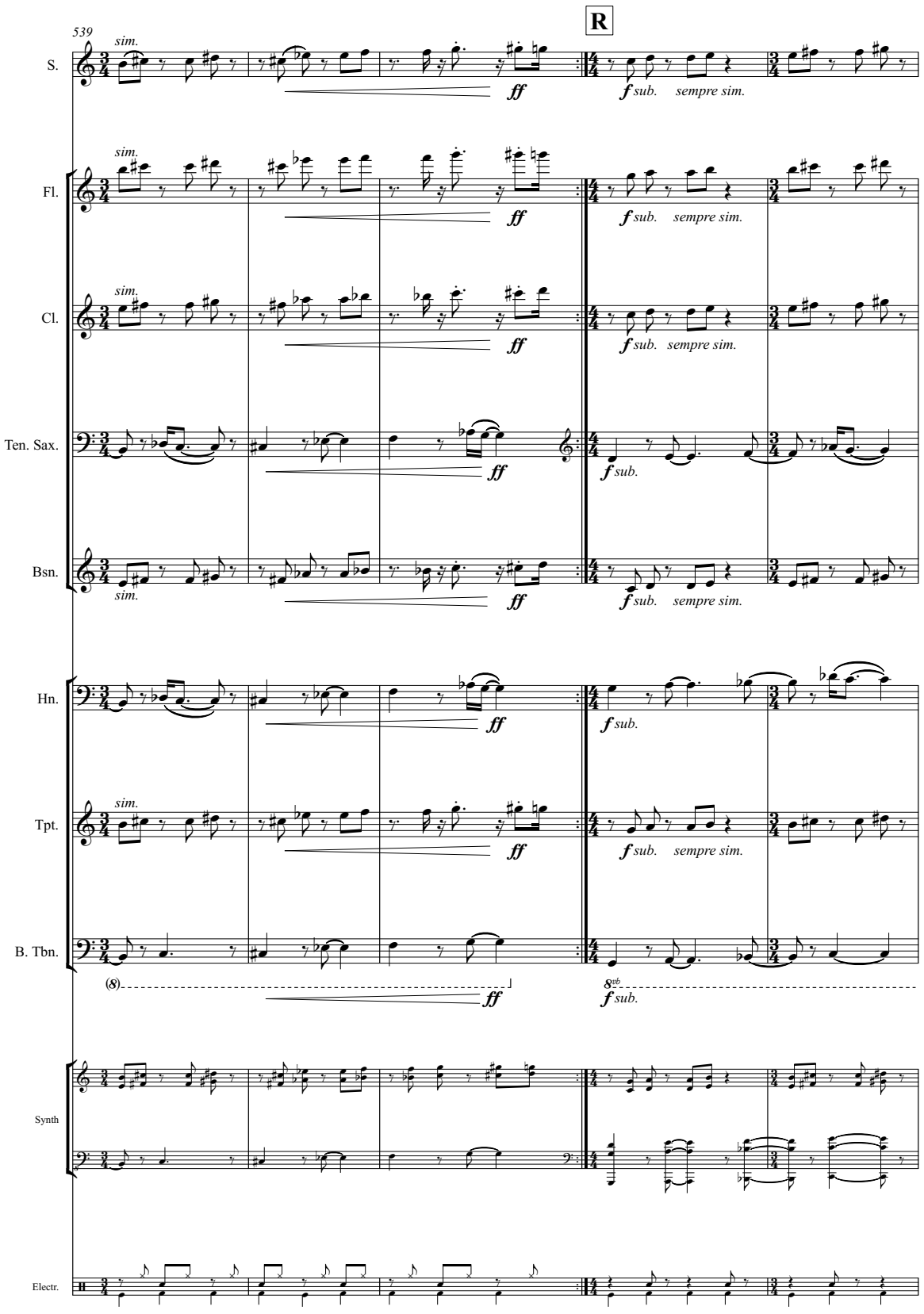

L3
510
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Synth
Electr.

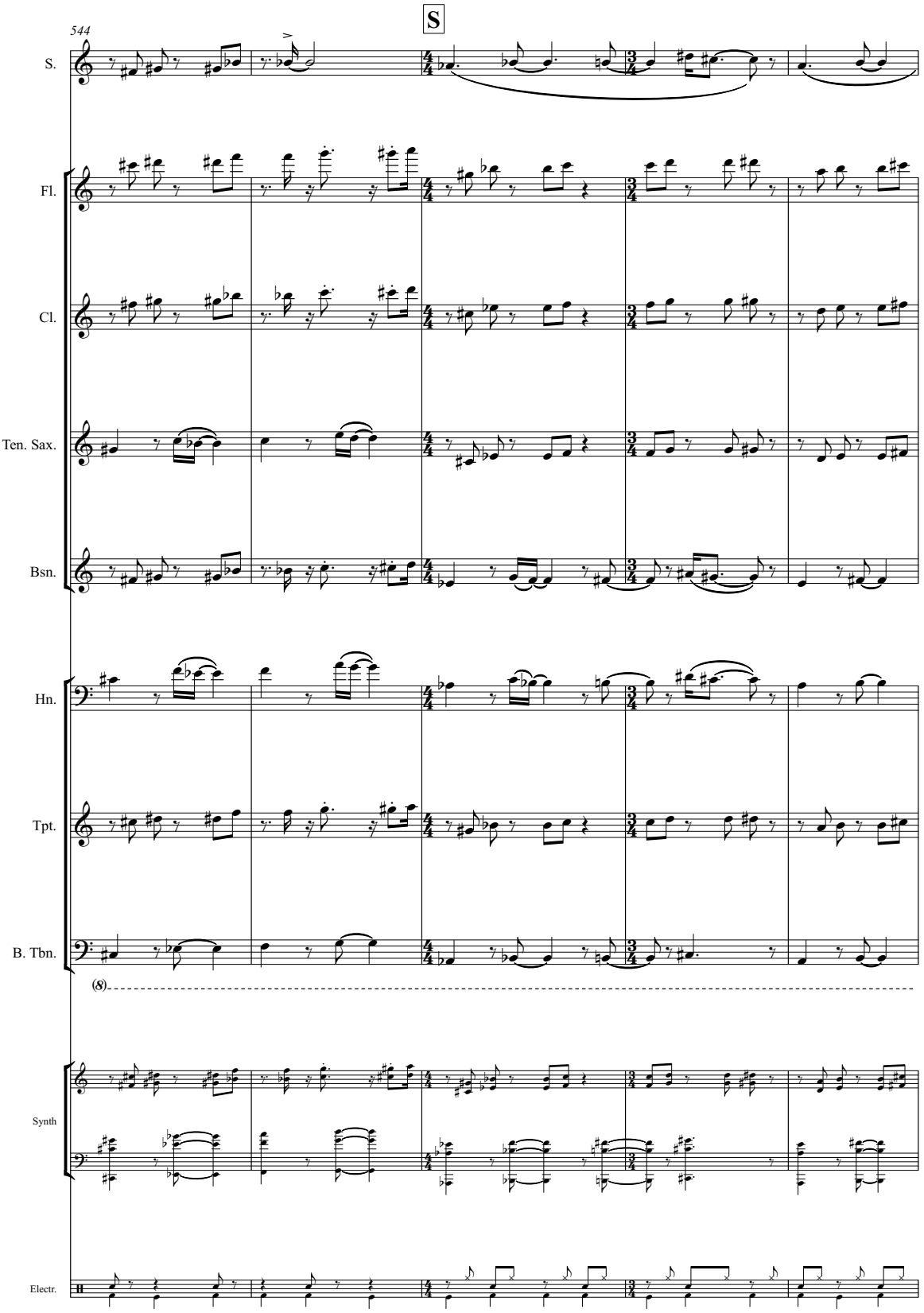

M1
514
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Synth
Electr.

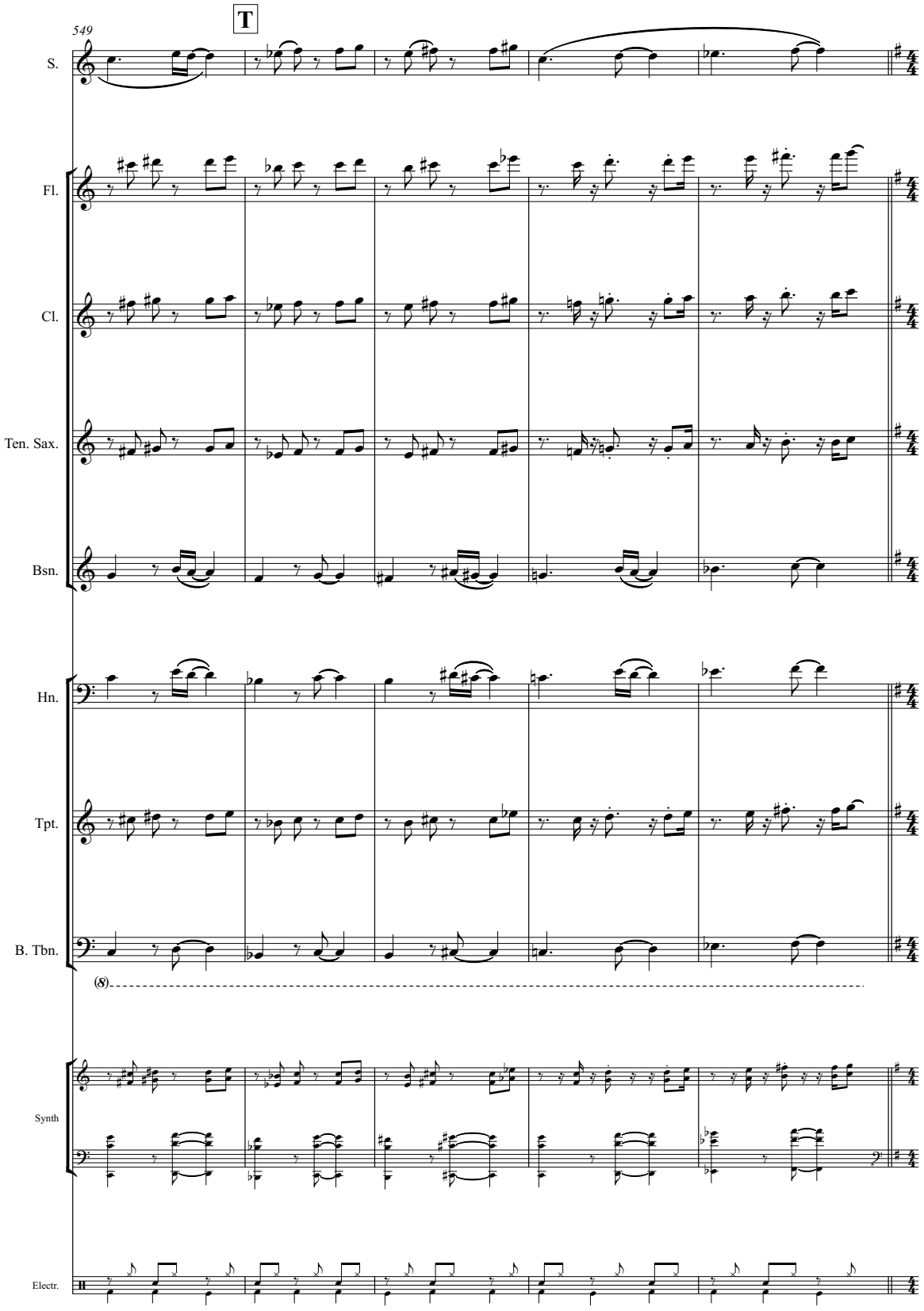

M2
M3
519
S.
Fl.
Cl.
mf
Ten. Sax.
mf
Bsn.
mf
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Synth
Electr.


528
N
O
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Synth
Electr.
second time only
sim.
8vb


534
P
Q
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Synth
Electr.
legato
mf
f
8vb


539
R
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Synth
Electr.
sim.
ff
f sub. sempre sim.
f sub.
8vb


544
S
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
(8)
Synth
Electr.


549
T
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
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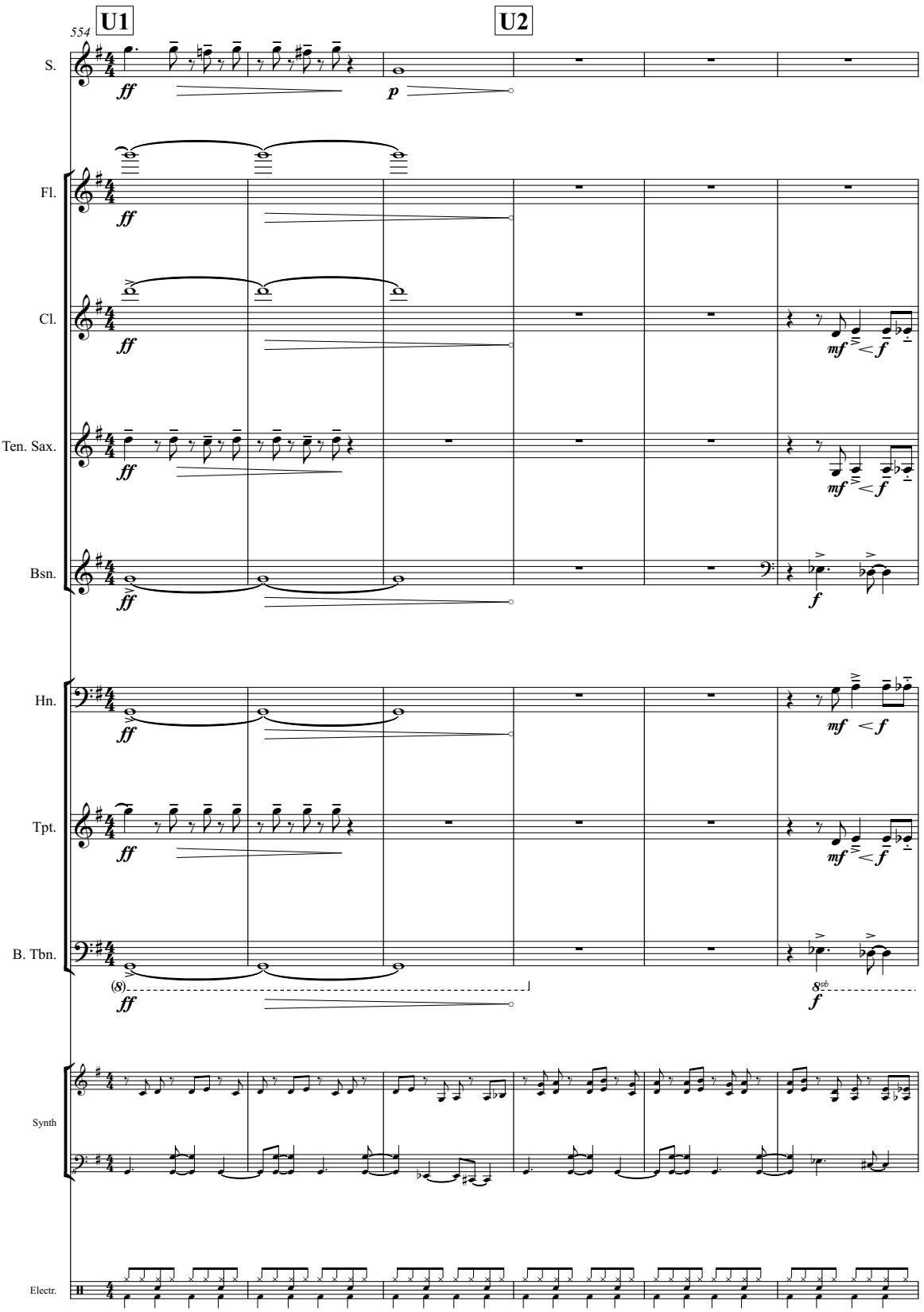
Synth
Electr.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U2
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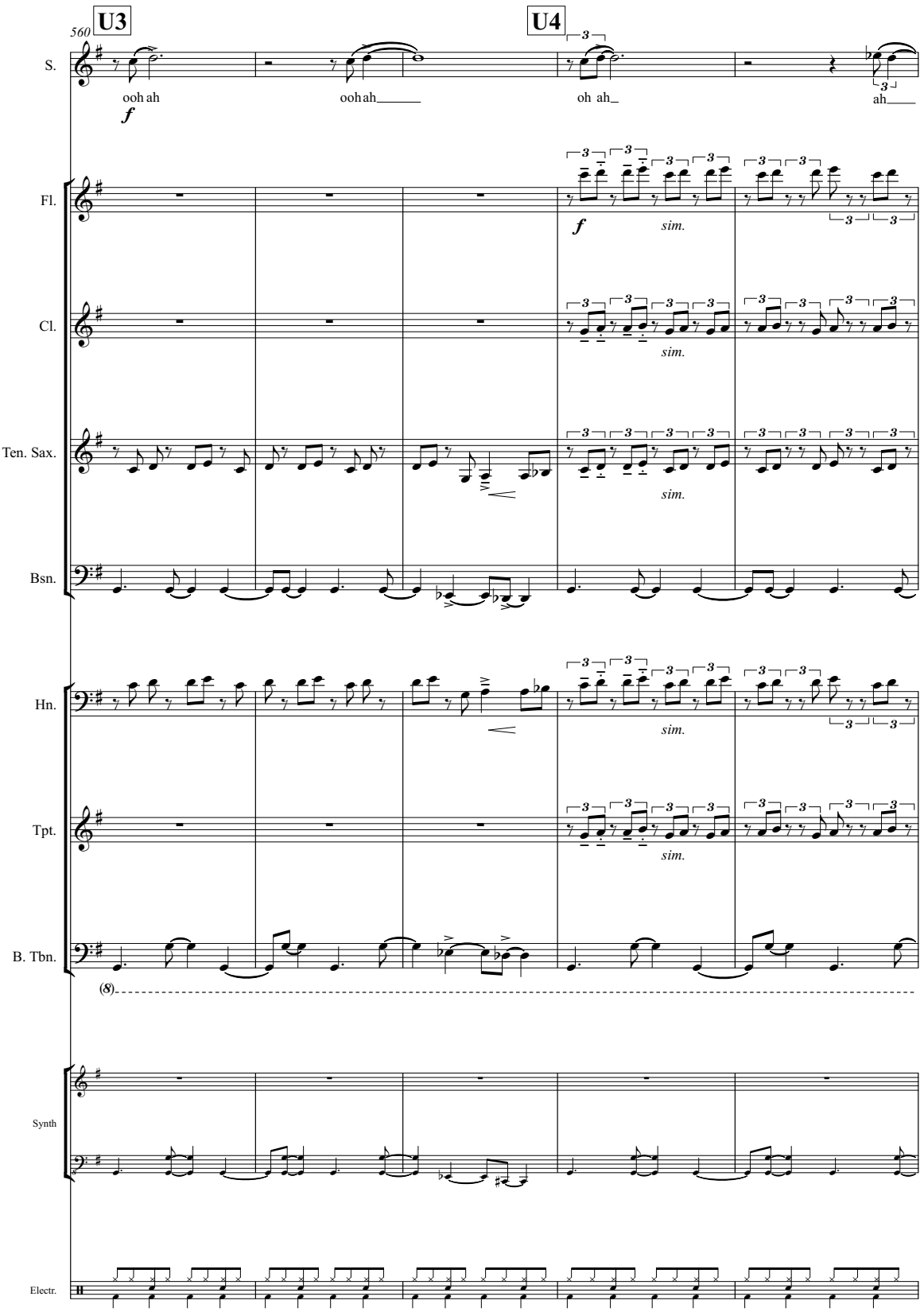
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U4
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ah
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Synth
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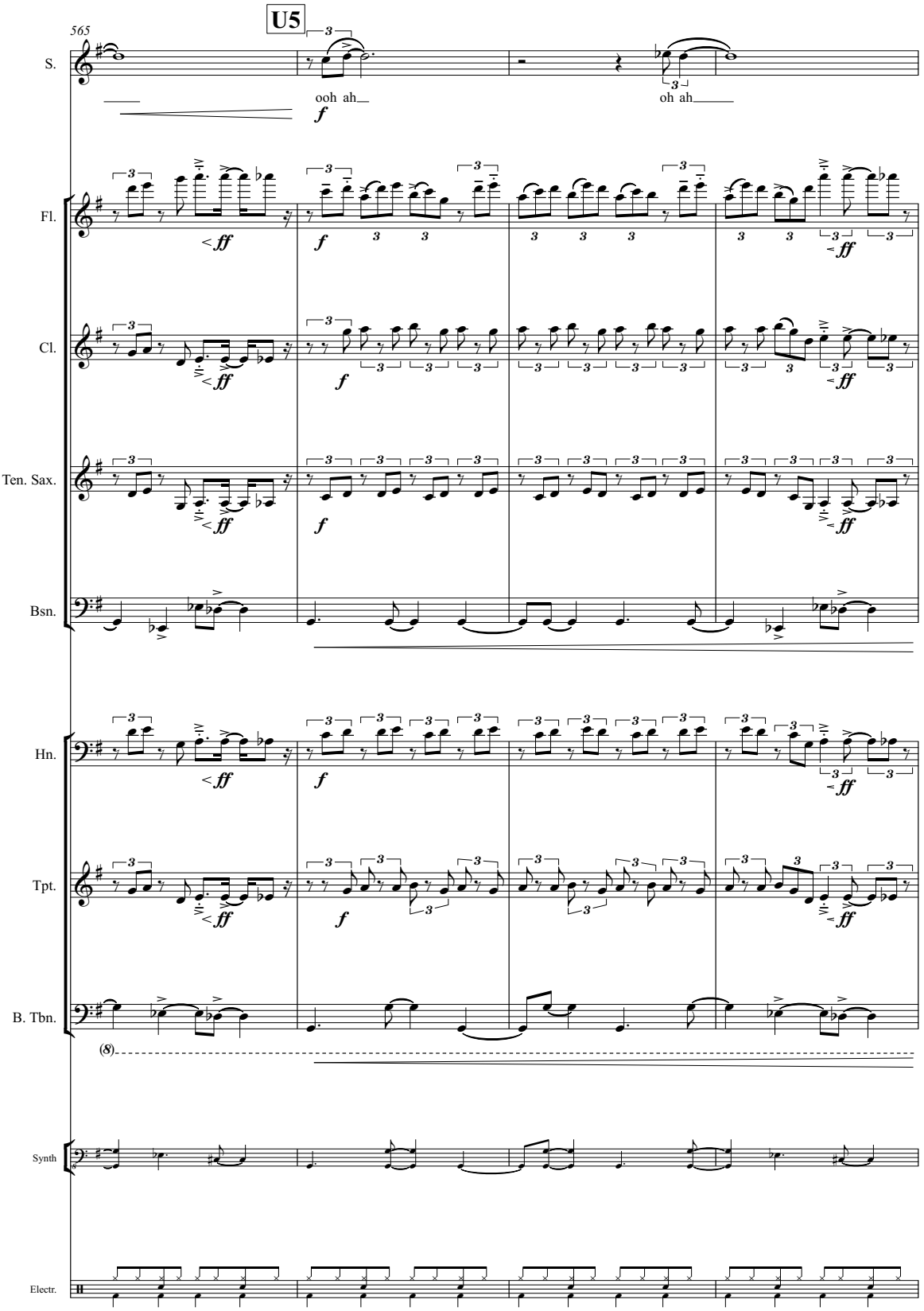
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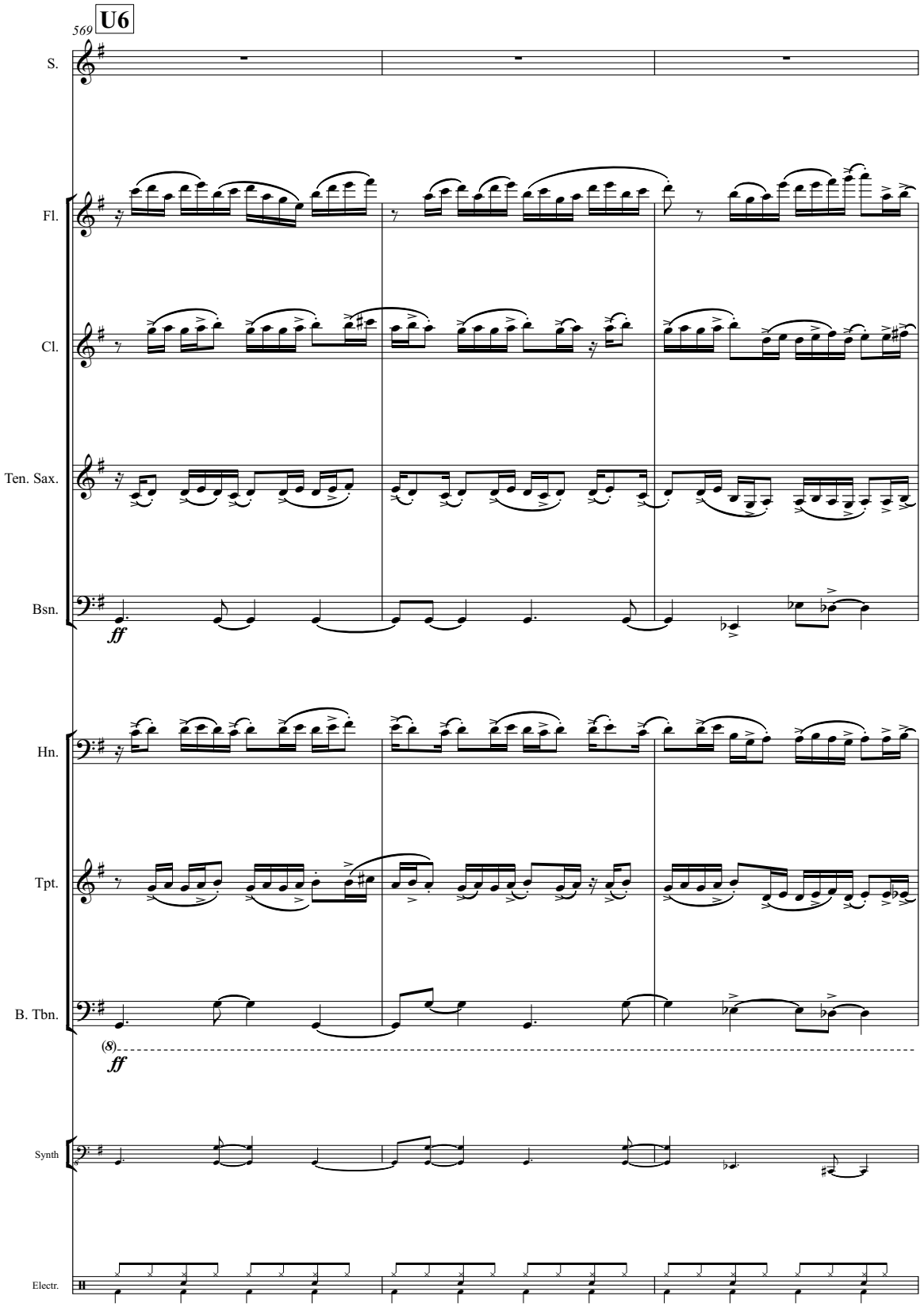
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ff
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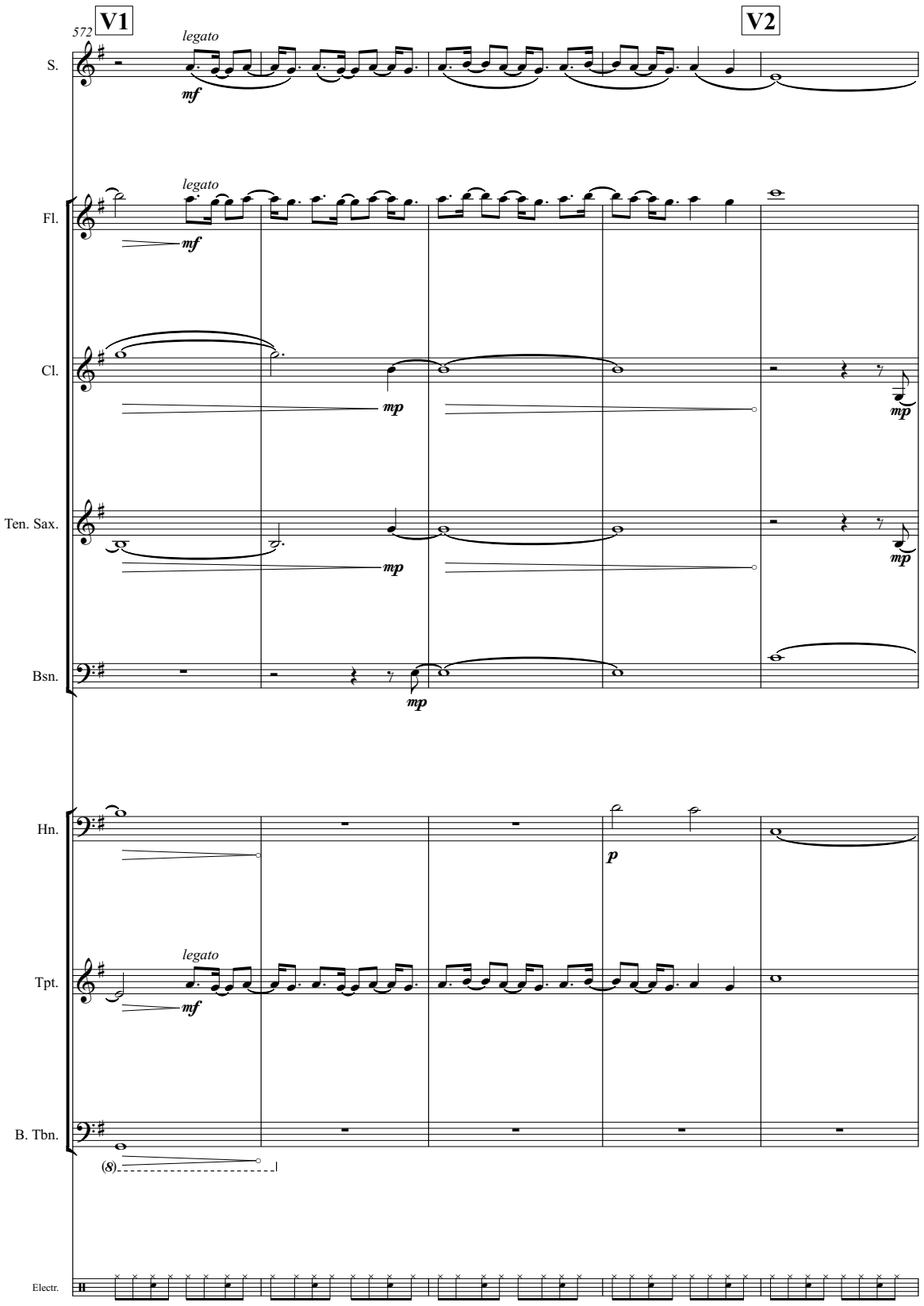
ff
Synth
Electr.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V2
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legato
mf
Fl.
legato
mf
Cl.
mp
mp
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mp
mp
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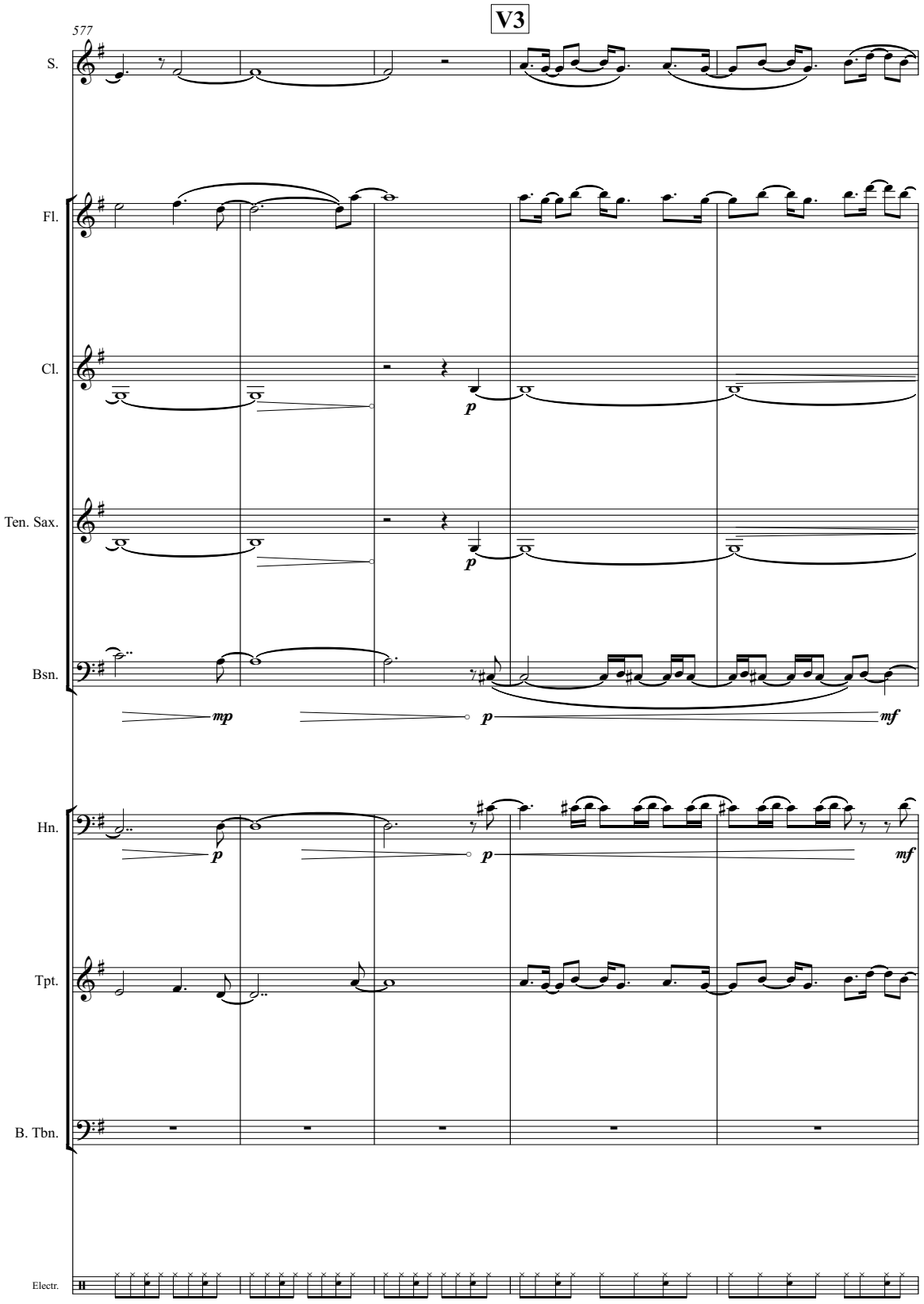
mp
Hn.
p
Tpt.
legato
mf
B. Tbn.
(8)
Electr.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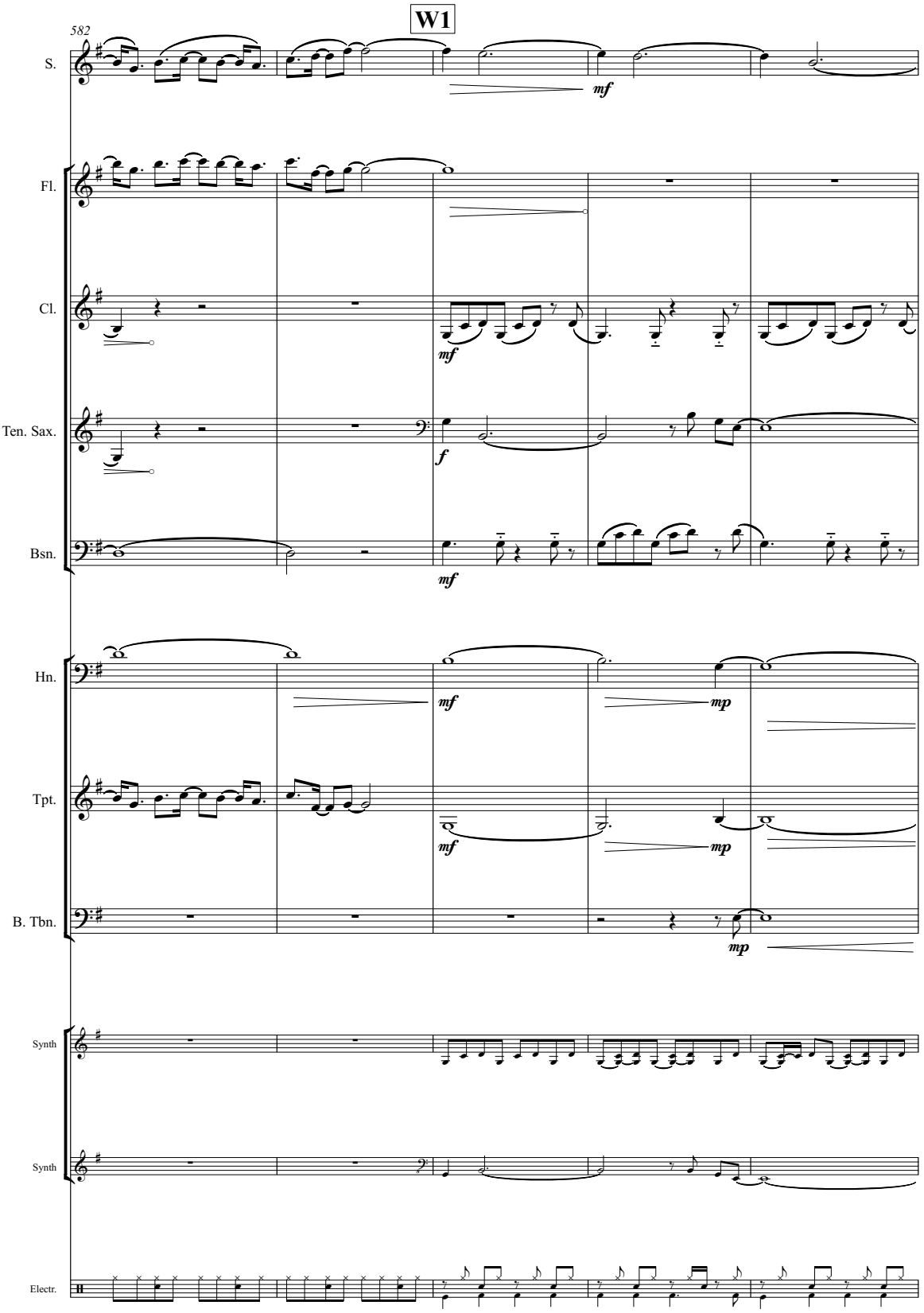
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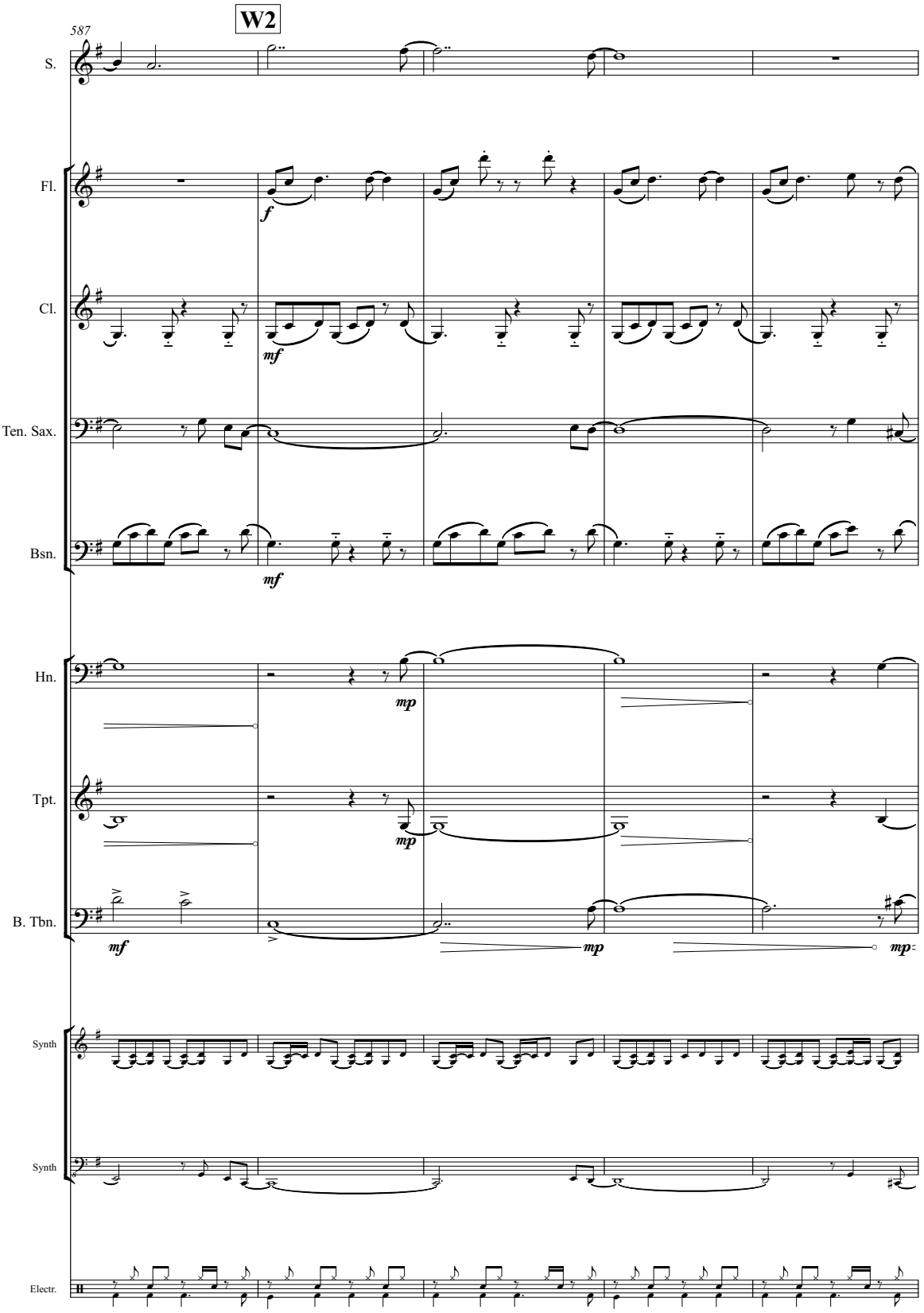
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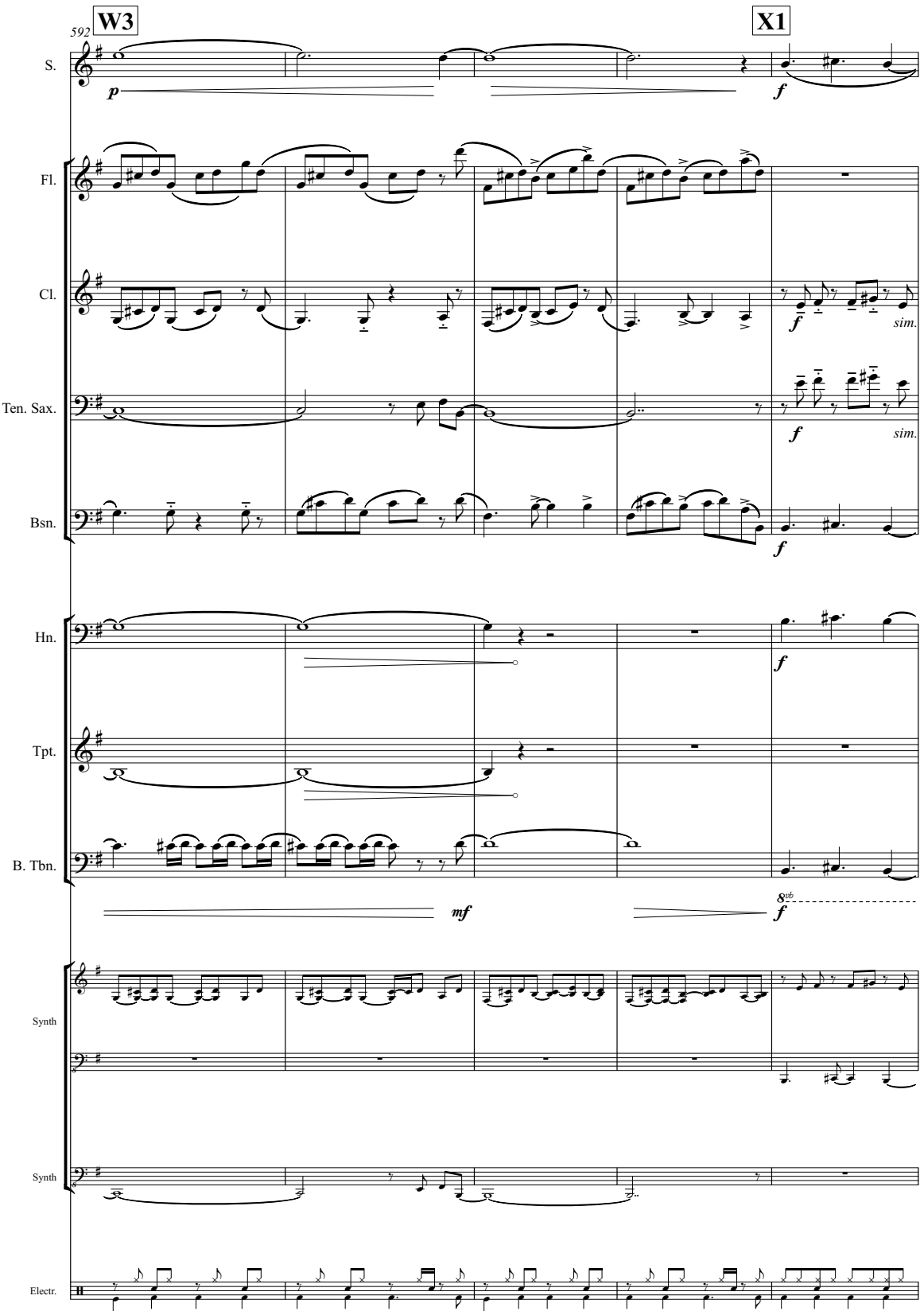
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Synth
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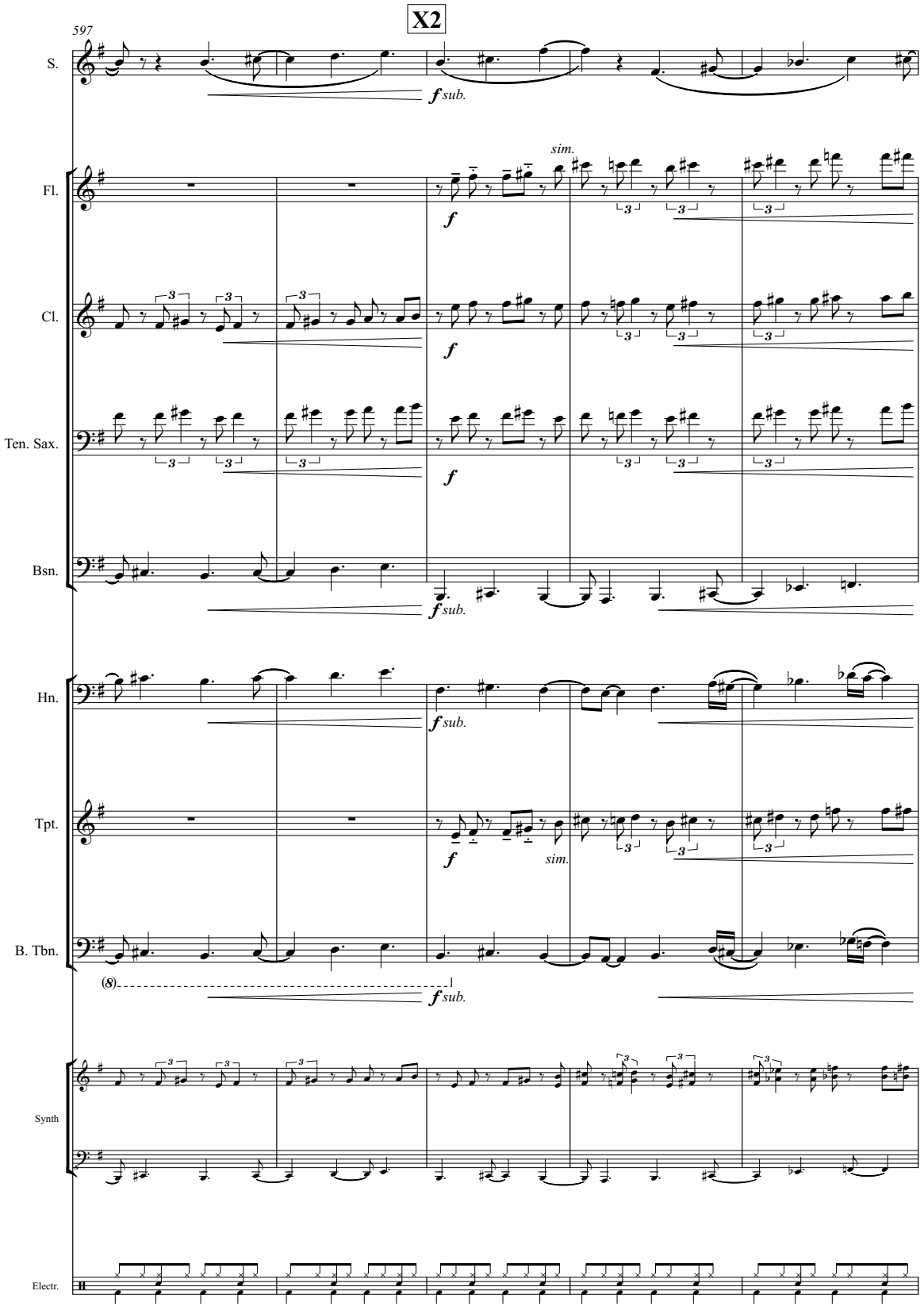
X2
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S.
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Cl.
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Bsn.
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Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Synth
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f sub.
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sim.
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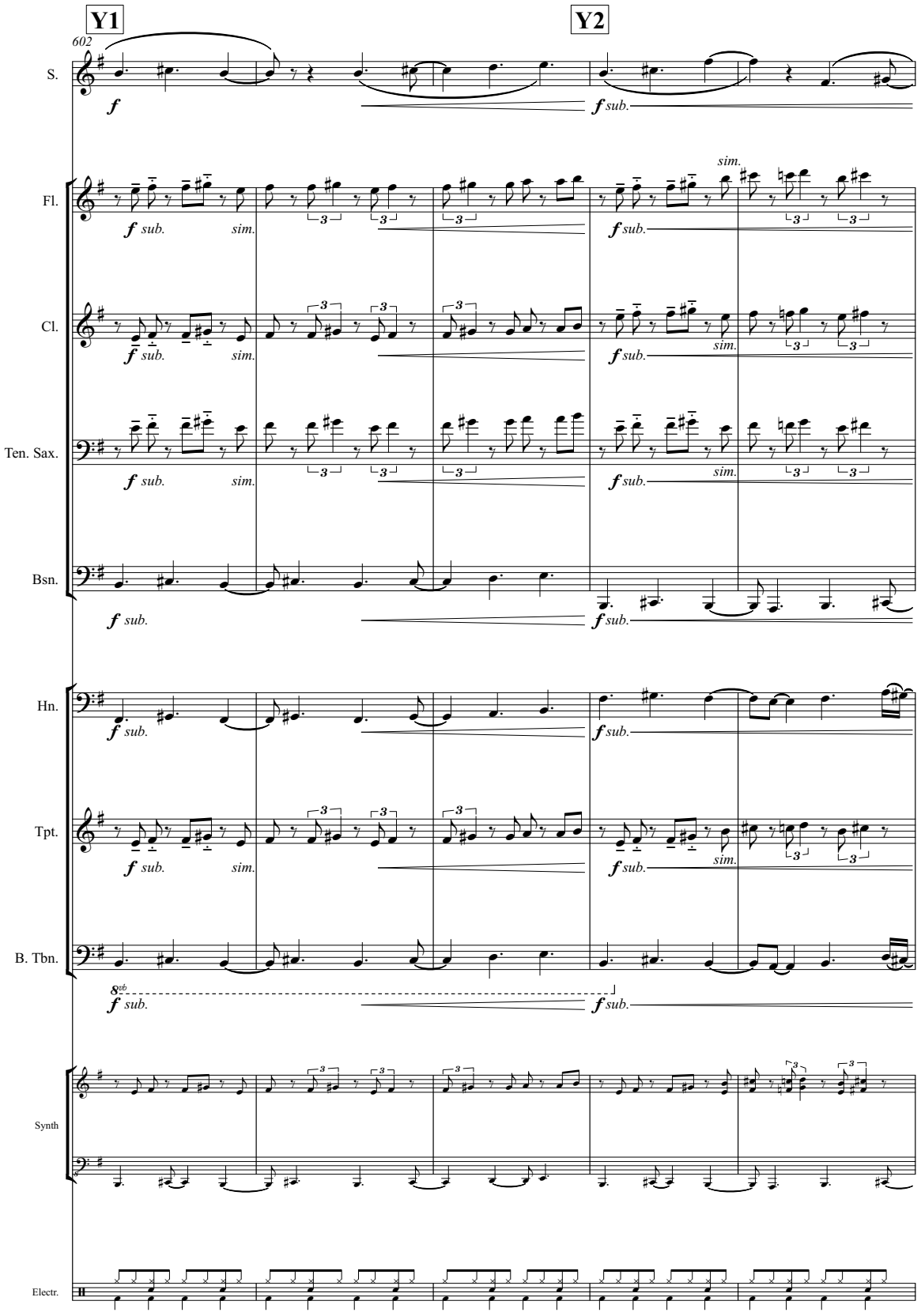
Y1
Y2
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B. Tbn.
Synth
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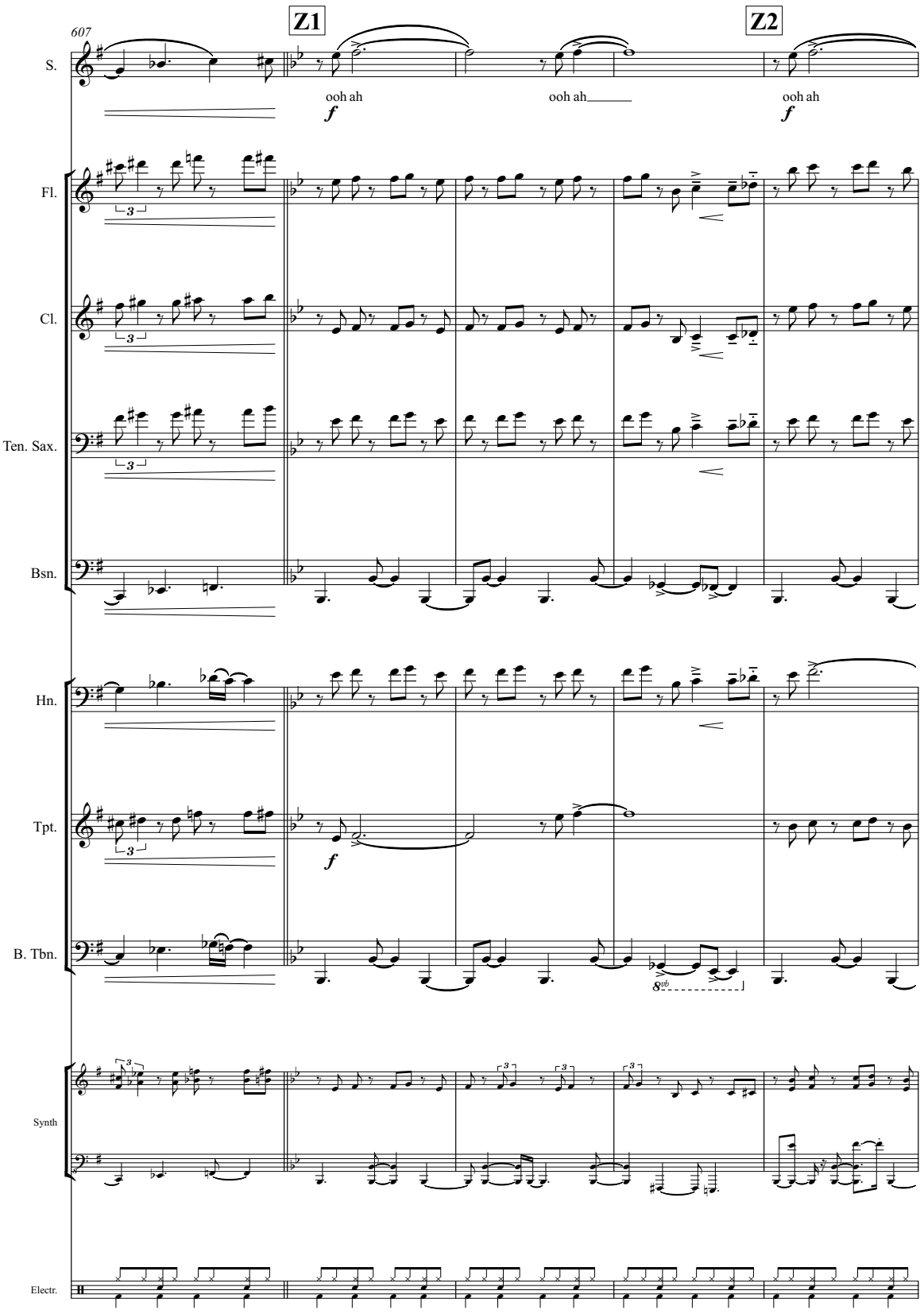
sim.
8vb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Z1
Z2
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Cl.
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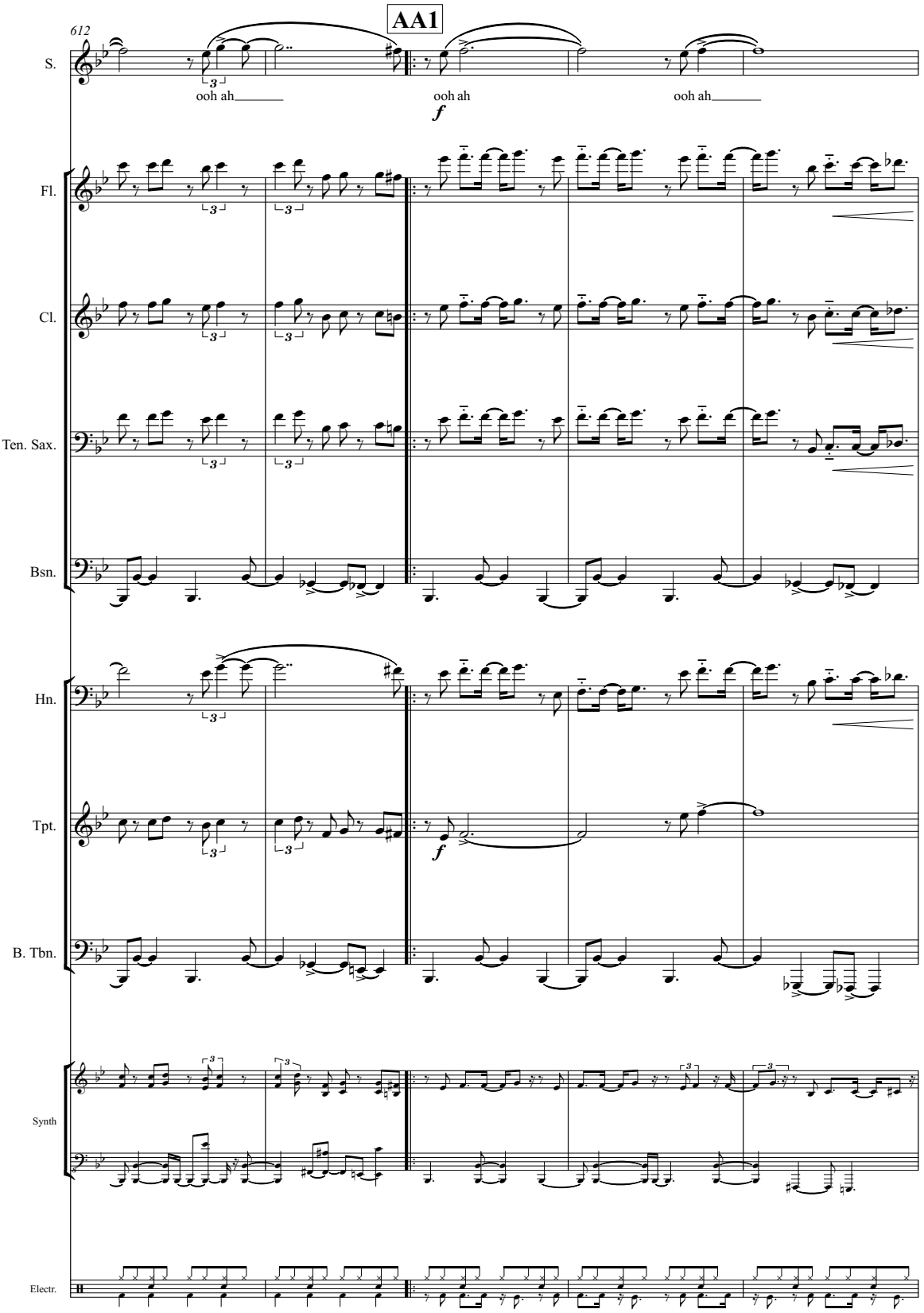
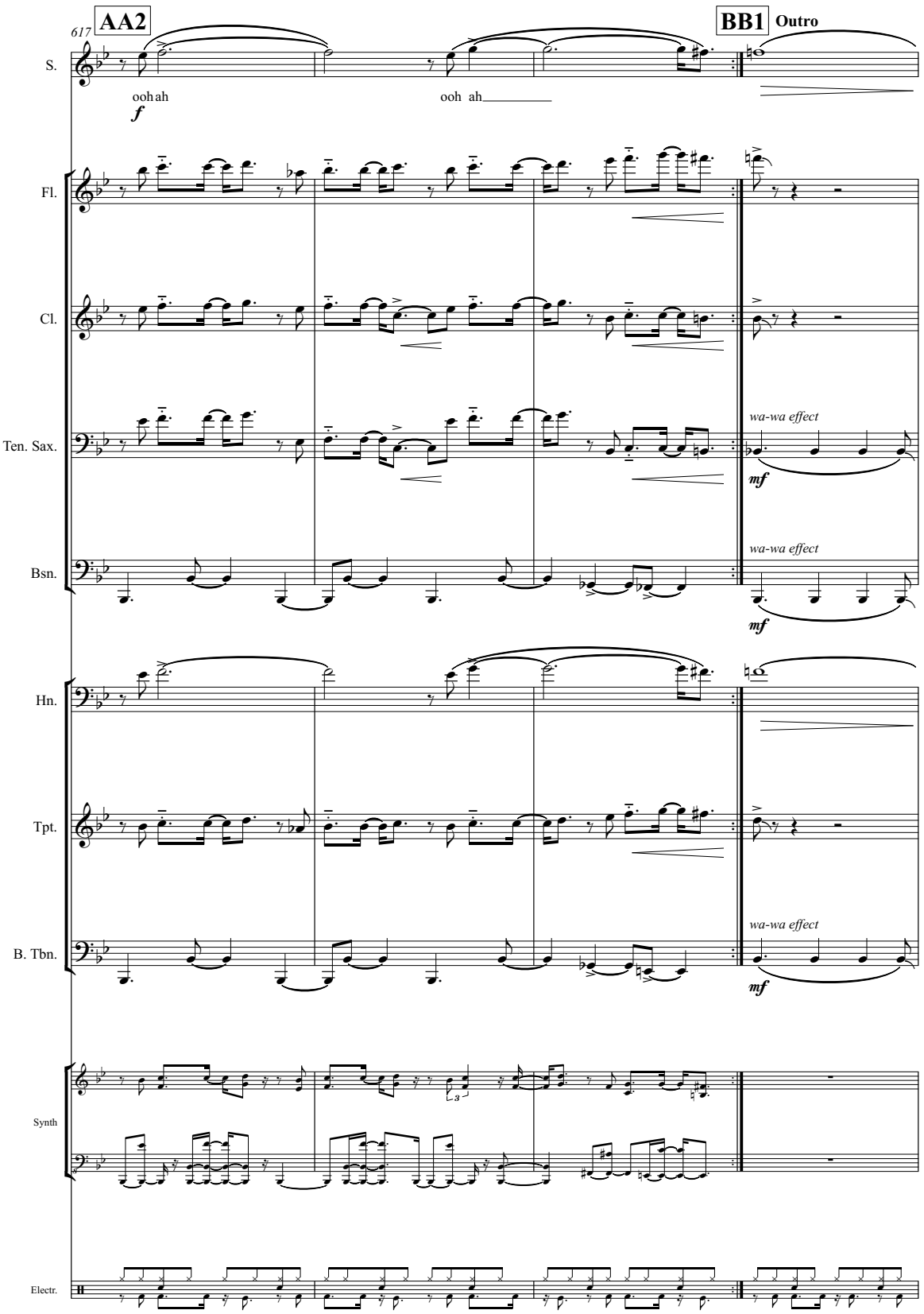
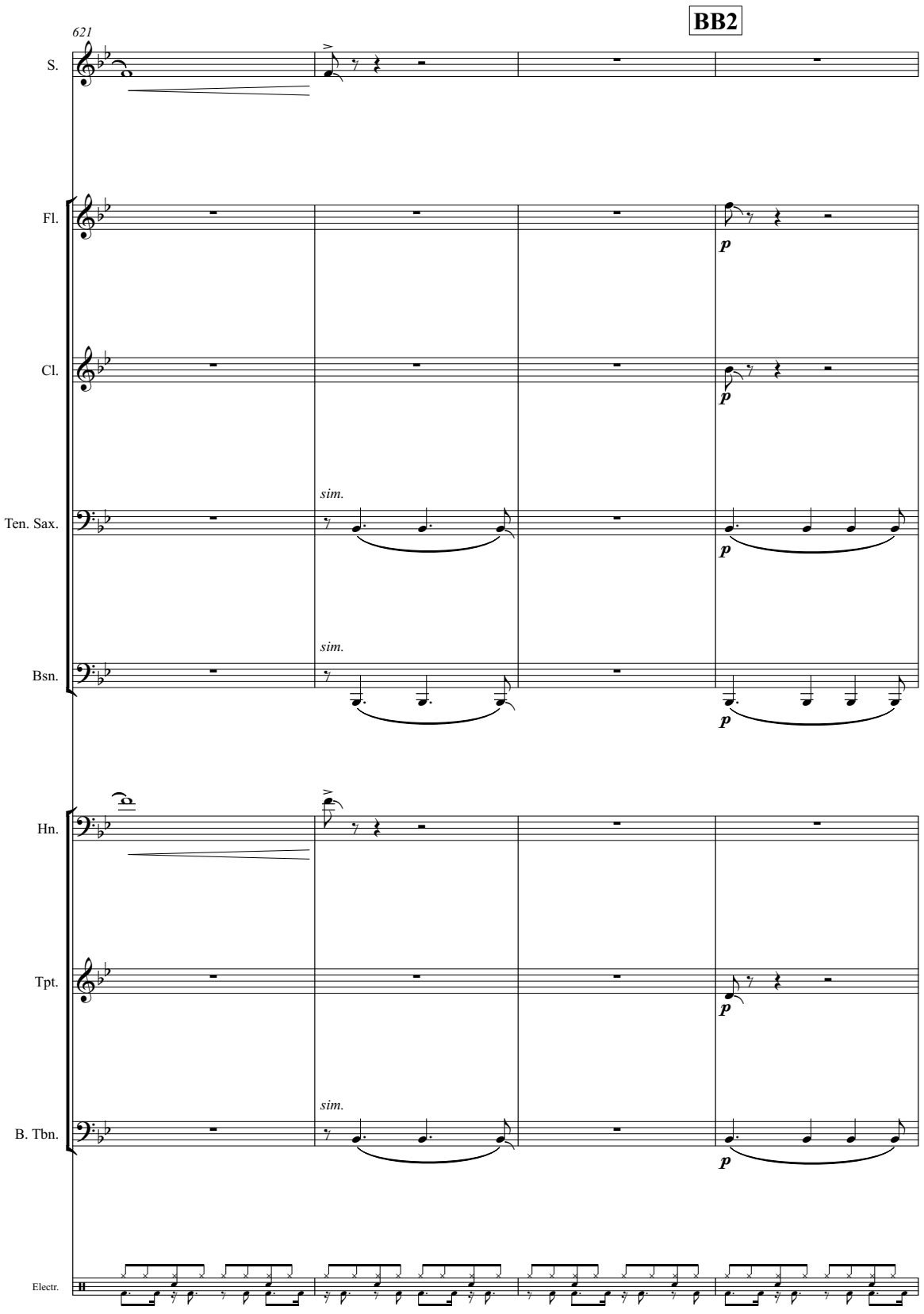
B. Tbn.
Synth
Electr.


AA1
612
S.
ooh ah
ooh ah
ooh ah
f
Fl.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
f
B. Tbn.
Synth
Electr.


617
AA2
BB1
Outro
S.
ooh ah
ooh ah
f
Fl.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
wa-wa effect
mf
Bsn.
wa-wa effect
mf
Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
wa-wa effect
mf
Synth
Electr.


BB2
621
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Ten. Sax.
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Hn.
Tpt.
B. Tbn.
Electr.
sim.
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p
p
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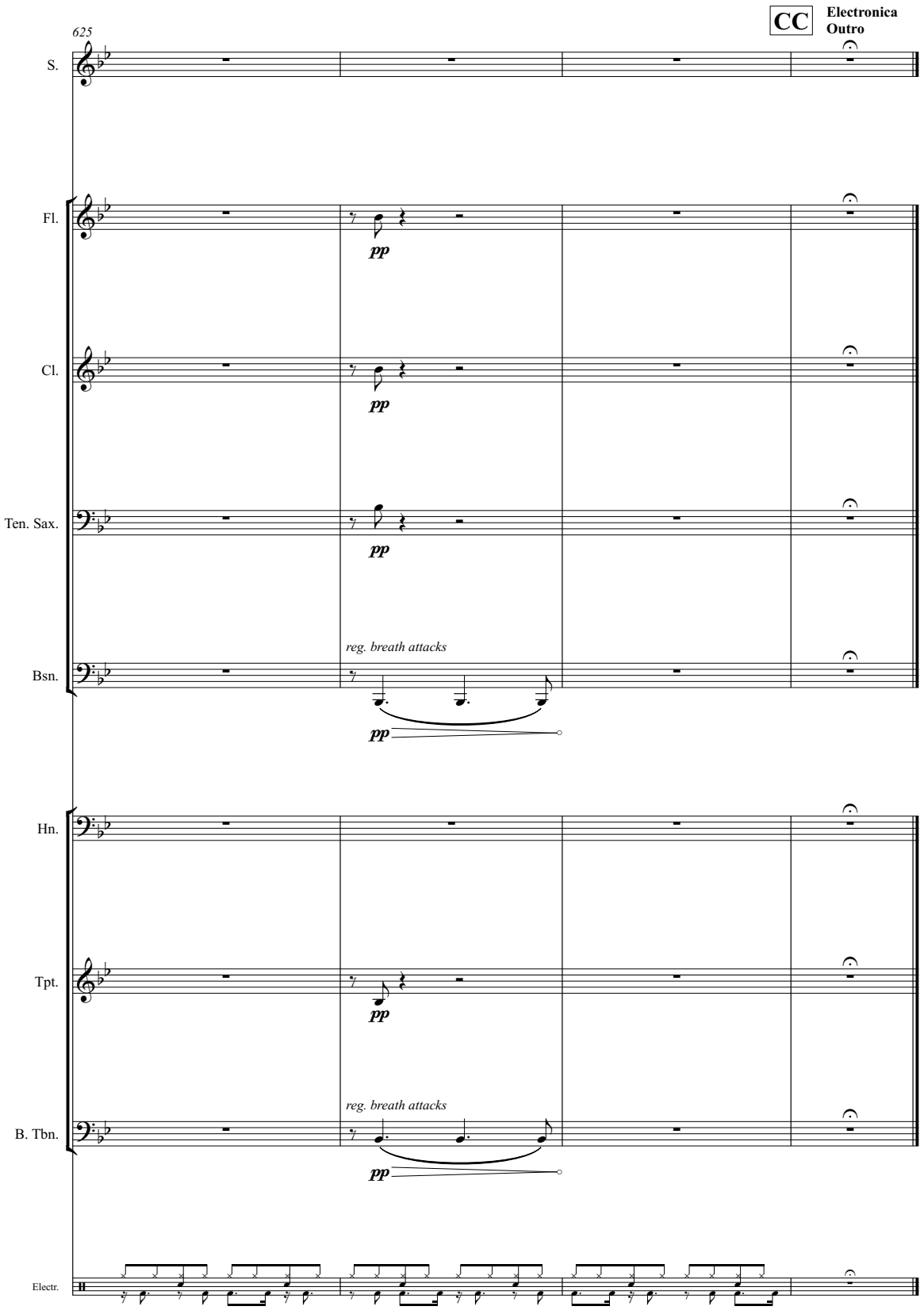
CC
Electronica
Outro
625
S.
Fl.
pp
Cl.
pp
Ten. Sax.
pp
reg. breath attacks
Bsn.
pp
Hn.
Tpt.
pp
reg. breath attacks
B. Tbn.
pp
Electr.

Chapter 2: Composers on the Decks: Hybridity of Place and Practice among Composer-DJs Gabriel Prokofiev, Mason Bates, Ari Benjamin Meyers and Brandt Brauer Frick

"Music is an art both of the mind and the body; dance rhythms course through most of the classics of the repertory. But in modern classical music the body seems repressed."
-Alex Ross[1]

Introduction

During my first few hours in Berlin, on a crisp spring night in 2005, my friend and I wandered into the Watergate Club along the Spree River a little after midnight. I remember orienting myself, taking in the club with its huge windows and a view of the river, ordering a German pilsner at the bar and then realizing what I was hearing: two shaggy-haired, young-ish guys playing Steve Reich's *Piano Phase* on two keyboards. (These two, it turned out, were composer Ari Benjamin Meyers and producer-pianist Max Loderbauer.) As I listened, I realized it was sounding good – the shifting phase relationships were tight, and that strange, disorienting effect happened the way Reich intended when the second piano would accelerate to the next rhythmic grouping. I had heard Reich's piece a number of times, but never in a nightclub. The set went on to include orchestrated, dance-oriented remixes of other Reich works played by Meyers' Redux Orchestra. The band consisted of trumpet, trombone, saxophones, drum set, and electric bass, as well as the keyboards. The music was groovy, and I danced a lot, not really believing the musical fusion I was witnessing. In fact, around that time, I'd been thinking about just that very thing, combining dance beats with live instrumental music, but I was far from making that a reality. The audience loved it.

After the Reich set, the well-known DJ Riccardo Villalobos played, followed by the DJ duo, the Märtini Brös. The gig did not plant the idea of instrumental-electronic dance music in my mind, as I had already dreamed of it, but it showed me that it could be

[1] Ross (2010)

done, and well, with broad appeal – at least, in Berlin. I had not heard of Ari Benjamin Meyers or the Redux Orchestra before that show, but I remembered Meyers' name and kept him on my radar, and I started looking for other composers who were presenting instrumental music in clubs. A few years later, I came across Mason Bates and Gabriel Prokofiev, two composer-DJs whose music and performance practices were also engaging with club culture. Around that same time, I was able to propose studying their work as the basis of research investigation for my doctoral study at Duke University.

In recent years, many composers and event planners have presented classical music in dance clubs. Meyers has fused his classically influenced, instrumental composition with electronic dance idioms, presenting this instrumental-electronic dance music in clubs, and DJs and producers have orchestrated their dance tracks and performed these in clubs and sometimes even formal concert halls. The result is a fresh combination of contemporary classical and electronic dance music (EDM) culture, often difficult to produce and still rare. Yet it is an exciting manifestation of younger composers' desire to reach a youthful and more vibrant audience – and to connect on a more physical and social level with this audience – and DJs' desire to collaborate with live instrumentalists. This fusion and its corresponding social practice mimic the relationship between American minimalist classical music and disco in the 1970s; both musical styles featured constant pulse, repetition and similar formal structures, and minimalists hosted shows in galleries and lofts. These parallel phenomena set the stage for more frequent and natural combination of live instruments with electronic beats in the future.

Meyers' Berlin-based Redux Orchestra is a seventeen-piece “club orchestra” that

has performed his original music as well as live remixes of music by various artists, from American minimalist composers to EDM producers. Mason Bates of San Francisco writes beat-based, electro-acoustic symphonic works for the United States' best orchestras and runs a club night in various cities called Mercury Soul, which features an evening-length ebb and flow of his own DJ sets and instrumental chamber music. London-based composer-DJ Gabriel Prokofiev runs Nonclassical Records, a record label that has released fourteen albums that consist of original, instrumental music and electronic remixes of these works, and which hosts a monthly club night. Brandt Brauer Frick, an EDM trio from Berlin known for playing an elaborate array of live analog electronics, performs instrumental techno with a large ensemble, both in clubs and concert halls. Other composers, producers, and event planners have all presented their own variations of "instrumental-EDM" or "club-classical." Using social and performance analysis, this study describes these phenomena as musical and social hybridity. For some time, classical music has struggled to attract younger listeners, and EDM has steadily gained popularity, even within mainstream pop music. Classical performances in dance clubs and music that fuses classical and EDM styles both provide new settings for the performance of classical music – attracting new audiences – and additional avenues for its musical influence.[2] With the growth of such events, classical music can expand beyond the concert hall and potentially see a demographic change in its audience over time.

Part 1 outlines the practice of club-classical, in which composers and event organizers present contemporary and past instrumental music in nightclubs. It focuses on

[2] It is, however, beyond the scope of this study to determine whether the events at hand bring new listeners into the concert hall.

Gabriel Prokofiev's Nonclassical record label and club night, Mason Bates' Mercury Soul club night, and Deutsche Grammophon's Yellow Lounge. Part 2 details the presentation of "instrumental-EDM," an emerging musical practice of combining elements from classical composition and electronic dance music, and analyzes the methods of Ari Benjamin Meyers and Brand Brauer Frick. Next, Part 3 delves into the narrow demographics of the musicians and audiences within these practices. Finally, Part 4 explores the difficulties of instrumental-EDM and analyzes the author's dissertation composition, *Alleys Of Your* Mind, and its presentation at the Duke Coffeehouse, situating it within the greater instrumental-EDM practice. This study explains the connections between the worlds of classical music and EDM and demonstrates the hybrid performance practice that connects them as both musically and practically innovative and important to the present and future of music.

Part 1: Classical in the Club

Background

When a close friend from college came to visit me in Berlin in 2013, we had planned to meet at the Philharmonie at 3:00 PM on a Saturday to hear Daniel Barenboim conduct the Verdi *Requiem*. I remember arriving at 3:03, and a few minutes later, after I had tracked down my ticket, I was told I would not be able to get to my seat behind the choir. Even between movements I would not be allowed to find my seat; those three minutes had cost me my seat for the entire performance. I did not know how much my friend had paid for the tickets, but it was no small sum.

The employee pointed behind herself and told me I could watch from "up there,"

and after an older gentleman and I could not find the right entrance, we had to go back and ask her to show us the way. Once we passed through a door with no handle, we were able to stand behind the seated audience in the way back of the hall. Even going to the restroom was tricky, as I was not sure I could get back in through the handle-less door.

Eventually I spotted my friend all the way across the auditorium, sitting beside my empty seat. In fact, there were a lot of empty seats. I think I know why, because there were a lot of people, minutes late, standing in the back with me. Unfortunately, there was no intermission when I could, as Matt Fretton of the "This Isn't For You" gig series in London puts it, "throw down a terrible glass of wine" before being "ordered back to [my] seat."[3] As a 29-year-old in Berlin researching instrumental-EDM and the club classical phenomenon, it was quite striking how rigid this ritual was compared to the nights (and sometimes days) of clubbing I have often experienced. I was struck by the degree of reverence for the music and ritual in the Philharmonie, something one forgets when mostly frequenting informal venues.[4] But people like Prokofiev, Fretton, Bates, and Felix Mesenburg[5] understand that the culture needs to offer different options for younger listeners. This paper's purpose is not to bemoan the decline of classical music, but to outline one way it can sustain itself as today's younger generations age.

Classical, dance and disco

Western classical music has a complex history of venue, with performances in

[3] Fretton, quoted in Colborne (2008)
[4] This reverence, like most components of a Berlin Philharmonic experience, pertains only to classical music tradition; reverence at a rock concert might entail cheering during a guitar solo, for example.
[5] Mesenburg is one of three people who run Deutsche Grammophon's Yellow Lounge classical club nights; see below for description of these events.

churches, concert halls, at social events and during meals. Concert hall presentations started to become the standard in the Romantic era, and in the 1960s and '70s, early minimalist bands challenged that standard, with groups such as the Steve Reich Ensemble playing in New York artist lofts, galleries, and museums.

Classical music's roots in dance music, such Schubert's recourse to the waltz or Bartok's reliance on Eastern European folk music, have long been the subject of academic study and acceptance in the concert hall. This connection is finding a contemporary echo in the works of composers who are blending the sounds of today's popular dance music into their works and, at the same time, presenting them in socially progressive spaces. I found that the artists described in this article retain some aspects of the musical structures of high modernism as taught in music academies, but they attempt to broaden their music's social function within popular and youth culture. Today's club classical phenomenon can also be seen as a contemporary incarnation of the minimalist-disco connection of the 1970s, discussed extensively by Robert Fink in his 2005 book, *Repeating Ourselves: American Minimal Music as Cultural Practice*.

1976 ushered in three important minimalist works: Donna Summer and Giorgio Moroder's 17-minute “Love to Love You Baby,” possibly disco's first extended dance remix; Steve Reich's *Music for Eighteen Musicians*; and Philip Glass and Robert Wilson's *Einstein on the Beach*. The song, the piece and the opera were all breakthroughs for their composers and performers. The late 1970s saw some disco-minimalism fusion, with Mike Oldham composing a “disco remix” of a Glass piece in 1979, and Glass himself joining a “post-disco band” called Polyrock, described as “extremely single-minded

dance music."[6] Cellist and composer Arthur Russell wrote and produced a number of major disco hits and was seen as the leader in "avant disco," a "stripped down fusion of club music and experimentalism."[7] Richard Sennett dubbed the work of Reich and Glass "the higher disco" because of its "visceral similarity" to disco.[8] Fink writes that with early Reich and Glass, minimalism no longer meant "simplicity," but "writing classical music with a beat."[9]

Traditional Western music is seen as having a coherent teleology, or a goal-direction and endpoint. Both disco and minimalism, with their "vastly extended timescale and large amounts of 'hypnotic' repetition,"[10] reconstruct this traditional teleology. While many musicologists and theorists have subscribed to a binary of teleological or non-teleological music, often accompanied by the dualities of Western/non-Western and masculine/feminine, Fink puts forth the concept of "recombinant teleology," forms that contain tension and release "on a scale that far outstrips the ability of the individual human subject to imagine a congruent bodily response."[11] In contrast, the arcs of tension and release of "classically teleological music" are "closely related to the timescale within which basic drives like hunger and sexual desire manifest themselves to consciousness."[12] Traditional Western teleology involves a single climax model, akin to the male orgasm, while minimalism and disco are comprised of numerous tension and release patterns, closer to female sexual rhythms, an escape from phallocentrism. Reich's music does have peaks and valleys; Alan Rich wrote of *Music for Eighteen Musicians*'

[6] Steven Grant and Ira Robbins, quoted in Fink (2005): 27
[7] Fink (2005): 27
[8] Richard Sennett, quoted in Fink (2005): 27
[9] Fink (2005): 27
[10] Fink (2005): 31
[11] Fink (2005): 44
[12] Fink (2005): 44

hypnotic qualities but also the composer's ability to "churn up the gut – very slowly, but with terrifying control."[13] In "Love to Love You Baby," Donna Summer simulates 22 orgasms over 17 minutes of tension and release.

Fink compares the 60-minute *Music for Eighteen Musicians* and "Love to Love You Baby." He finds that they have nearly identical structures. Both begin with a three-minute opening section, followed by numerous variations on this opening, and close with a restatement of the original material. Both mirror the structure of a DJ set, with different sections functioning like separate tracks with their own "buildups" and "breakdowns," linked together by a DJ. Both feature additive and subtractive processes over often static harmony.

About 30 years later, we are seeing newer dance music and recent instrumental composition fuse together both musically and socially. Contemporary, often post-minimalist composers are connecting their instrumental harmonies with the electronic beats of EDM, and it makes sense. Dance music and minimalism have both evolved, but the two worlds are still musically compatible. Disco, which was often recorded with live instruments but largely spun in clubs by DJs, is the direct predecessor of house music and, thus, a highly influential genre in EDM history. Within post-minimalist styles, such as those of John Adams or Julia Wolfe, it is common to find minimalist techniques embedded in compositions that are not, on the whole, minimalist. But the social worlds of dance and concert music are largely separate, and today's instrumental-EDM, like the minimalism of the late 1970s, has left the concert halls of the classical establishment for alternative venues.

[13] Alan Rich, quoted in Fink (2005): 41

The "No-Applause Rule" and exclusionary conventions

In a lecture at the Royal Philharmonic Society in London, Alex Ross details the history of clapping only at the end of a concert work, instead of after each movement, calling this practice the "No-Applause Rule." Audiences used to clap after each movement of a composition, and even during movements themselves. Change began when, in the Romantic era, "the cult of the Work" as a complete whole replaced eighteenth-century "episodic entertainments."[14] Beethoven began weaving movements together instead of having them stand alone, paving the way for similar structures from Schubert, Liszt and Strauss. Mendelssohn and Schumann both expressed their desire for certain works to be played without breaks to prevent audience reaction from interrupting them. In 1900, clapping between movements was still the norm, but as opera audiences retained their custom of clapping after arias, concert halls began to take on a role of refuge from popular culture, and concert hall reform became a common discourse in German music journals. Delaying applause until the end of the work was one suggested reform. By the 1920s, a number of major international conductors were clamping down on applause, though this new practice was controversial. Clapping was also frequently removed from recordings of live music, resulting in concert-goers replicating what they had heard at home; musicologist Mark Katz would term this a "phonograph effect."[15]

As the twentieth century progressed, the "No-Applause Rule" became codified in classical music performance. New concert-goers, including U.S. President Barack

[14] Ross (2010)
[15] See Mark Katz' *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (2004) for a chronology of phonograph effects throughout the twentieth century.

Obama,[16] are often unsure of when to clap; some are hushed when they do so "at the wrong time." Fear of misplaced applause and the resulting scolding from more experienced patrons can taint the new listener's experience and cause her to never return to the concert hall.

Ross also mentions other archaic elements of concert music: "the vaguely Edwardian costumes, the convention-center lighting schemes, the aggressive affectlessness of the average professional musician, especially in America."[17] These customs have taken hold over more than a century. It is understandable that many living today, most of whom were born after the customs became entrenched in classical music performance, consider them essential for an optimal concert-going experience, and for showing respect to the music and performers. While Ross does not worry about the fate of classical music itself in this article, he does prophesy that institutions that "have essentially refused to evolve for the better part of a century"[18] may go extinct. He says that our wide array of vastly different music demands a diversity of performance settings, instead of one, tired format. And in briefly suggesting adaptations for the classical scene, he mentions Gabriel Prokofiev as a prime example.

Contemporary Classical

Bates and Prokofiev have both innovated in terms of the presentation of contemporary classical[19] music, but in different ways. Prokofiev's record label,

[16] Ross (2010)
[17] Ross (2010)
[18] Ibid.
[19] The term "contemporary classical" refers to "classical" music that has been (relatively) recently composed. "Classical" itself is a poor term, as "Classical" refers to a period of music during the 18th and

Nonclassical Records, puts on monthly club nights in London, during which contemporary classical chamber sets are interspersed with informal DJ sets by Prokofiev, Richard Lannoy, Nwando Ebizie or guest DJs, usually consisting of remixes of original works that the label has released. Bates, while primarily a composer of electro-acoustic concert music, occasionally presents Mercury Soul club nights, which involve members of a symphony orchestra playing sets of contemporary music alongside DJ sets from Bates and sometimes others. Both formats, in the stated aspirations of the composers, are geared towards broadening the audience for classical music in general, yet still put the focus on contemporary classical. In some ways, when the ensemble performs, it is still a traditional recital. The ensemble plays separate, acoustic, contemporary classical works, and the audience quiets down and generally does not physically interact with the music while listening. Accordingly, Prokofiev and Bates still identify primarily with the classical world. Yet these two situate the music in venues not typically associated with the classical concerts, changing the listening environment and carefully preparing the listeners' minds and ears for the live chamber sets. While Prokofiev and Bates tend to overemphasize the significance of electronic dance music in their live performances in publicity and interviews, these "club-classical" formats provide an interesting new way to hear classical music and invigorate an often static performance practice.

19th centuries. For lack of a better word, "classical" is commonly used today to denote music composed in the Classical tradition; that is, through-composed, instrumental music that is (now) mainly performed in concert halls. Others terms are worse because of their value judgments (new music, which suggests that other forms of recently composed music are not "new"; serious music; art music; etc.). I choose the term "contemporary" because "modern" could be confused with "Modern," which refers to the specific period of Modernism in the early- to mid-20th century. "Contemporary classical" is not to be confused with the "adult contemporary" genre of popular music. Gabriel Prokofiev uses "contemporary classical" to describe the music of Nonclassical Records.

Subvision

The earliest classical club night I have come across in my research is Subvision, run by Richard Lannoy and Jan Sodderland from 1998 to 2006, originally at the Bartok club in Chalk Farm, London. Lannoy had just finished studying composition at the Royal Academy of Music, and the duo would DJ classical music, electronic dance music, and their own compositions, often collaborating with live instrumentalists. After sets of live music, Lannoy "would play faster electronica, toying with the edge of techno, but never dissolve into 4-to-the-floor House for example."[20] Lannoy's website chronicles press coverage, mostly positive, from the party's first few years. His reasons for starting Subvision are similar to those of most in the club classical world; he and Sodderland were "just trying to get back to the idea of people enjoying the music as a social occasion,"[21] "breaking down boundaries,"[22] and "to get the music, in particularly [sic] contemporary, innovative Art music out there to the general public both through live performance and DJing, cutting through all the tired 'elitist' excuses."[23] Like Prokofiev and Meyers, Lannoy saw the similarities between contemporary classical and electronic dance music. He is quite interested in the European avant-garde, mentioning Helmut Lachenmann and talking about technology influencing acoustic compositional technique, "keeping the acoustic vibe alive."[24]

Lannoy says Prokofiev must have learned of Subvision from these press articles, and Prokofiev eventually approached Lannoy, asking him to join Nonclassical as another

[20] Lannoy, e-mail to the author (2013)
[21] Lannoy, in Roundhouse Radio's interview: Lannoy (2011)
[22] Lannoy, in Ross Wittenham's interview, posted on Lannoy's website.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Lannoy, personal interview (2011)

resident DJ.

Gabriel Prokofiev and Nonclassical Records

Gabriel Prokofiev, the grandson of Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev, was born in London in 1975 and started with music when he was ten years old, playing in pop bands and eventually writing some songs. Before going to university, he volunteered in Tanzania and recorded Maasai folk music. Prokofiev studied classical composition and electronic music at Birmingham and York universities, where he earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees, respectively. After winning the Bourges International Competition for Electronic Music and a composition residency in Seattle in 1998, he produced and performed various dance, "sonic art," and African music under a number of aliases to avoid association with his famous grandfather, Sergei.[25] Prokofiev does not talk much about his stint with pop, but he was part of a successful four-person "disco-punk" band called Spektrum, founded in 1999, which even had a number one hit on the UK Dance Chart in 2007. In 2003, he co-founded an electronic music record label called Nonstop Recordings.

Prokofiev began putting his contemporary classical music in nightclubs because he wanted his friends to come hear it, and he knew they would not come to a traditional, sit-down classical recital. He wanted to perform live classical music "in a setting that felt more appropriate for [his] generation."[26] The first Nonclassical night was on March 17, 2004 at Cargo in London. The Elysian Quartet, a young British group that had already played classical music in popular venues, premiered Prokofiev's first string quartet;

[25] Coffey (2004)
[26] Prokofiev, personal interview (2011)

Louisa Duggan also played solo harp, and Prokofiev DJed. The gig was a release party for an album, which consisted of the quartet composition and five remixes[27] of the work by Ed Laliq, BoxSaga (whose real name is Nick Phillips, the co-founder of Nonstop Recordings), David Schweitzer, Max de Wardener, and Prokofiev himself.

Nonclassical initiated the remixes for a few reasons. When planning for his performance in a nightclub, Prokofiev thought that naturally, in between sets, there would have to be a DJ. In thinking about what music a DJ could spin that would fit well between classical sets yet also sound good acoustically, remixes seemed like a promising idea. Another reason was the potential to appeal to listeners who would not normally seek out contemporary classical music and perhaps even draw them towards the original instrumental work. "It's a kind of covert way of getting people to maybe listen to harmonies and textures and instrumentation they wouldn't normally listen to, and then they might even be able to enjoy listening to the original version."[28] For the first release, Prokofiev's *String Quartet No. 1* was only 14 minutes long, so he took a cue from dance music and used remixes by himself and four others to extend the album to 33 minutes.

The remixes themselves are intended to harken directly back to the originals. Instead of drum beats or synthesizer sounds idiomatic to various forms of electronic dance music, producers may only use sound sources from the original recording. In his "Note for Remixers" in anticipation of his *Concerto for Turntables and Orchestra*

[27] The definition of "remix," and how it differs from "edit," "rework," or "cover," is complex. Remix is defined by Mark Butler as "an alternate version of an EDM track [a complete EDM composition…Connotes an instrumental, rhythmic emphasis, as opposed to the emphases on voice and pitch found in a "song"] based on studio manipulation of the track's master tapes. The extent to which the original recording is transformed varies widely, ranging from slight alteration to radical reconstruction…Though the term "remix" generally implies involvement from someone other than the creator of the original track, producers may also record several different versions of their own tracks" (Butler, 327). Prokofiev often remixes his own works, sometimes more than once.

[28] Prokofiev, personal interview (2011)

release, Prokofiev stipulates this "house rule,"[29] writing that "the Remixers must NOT use any extra sounds other than those from the Original Master Recordings. Any sounds you need must be made from those on the Remix parts DVD. So NO extra drum sound, synths, or guitars, etc…"

Prokofiev (and Bates) is concerned with the audience, not just in terms of alternate venues for listening, but in relation to priming the audience's ears. Prokofiev started by conceiving of "continuous music and creating a whole vibe and a whole evening."[30] Nonclassical Records, with its remixes of the original classical works on the albums,

> started to provide ideal music to DJ...alongside contemporary classical performances. If you just try and DJ pure contemporary classical music, often the way it's produced, and the nature of the music, means the dynamic range is just so great, in the kind of the dynamic bar atmosphere it just disappears, and then suddenly you'll hear this loud crescendo and a kind of scream, and then there'll be nothing – it just doesn't really work. So the remixes we've got are really cool because the production angle and the production standards are more geared towards PA systems and being played in a sort of noisy environment. But it's still got contemporary classical sounds in it.[31]

By seeking out remixes of the acoustic works, and mastering them with EDM standards of compression and equalization in mind, Prokofiev has curated a growing library of tracks to DJ at the label's club nights. Prokofiev says, "The DJ sets should react to the live performances, so sometimes I always look for some material that's similar instrumentation to what's just been onstage so that connects with it."[32] Often, he will play

[29] Soosan Lolavar refers to this stipulation as a "house rule" in her 2011 ethnography of Nonclassical.
[30] Prokofiev, personal interview (2011)
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.

a remix of a piece that has just been performed live.

Prokofiev describes a classic London club called Limelight, which has put on mainly jazz and rock gigs but also hosts a monthly classical night. He went to see a great pianist play some classical works, and after the set, a standard rock CD came on over the house sound system, possibly Oasis. "You've gone to this effort of creating this vibe, and then afterwards you put on any old shitty rock CD. And that's weird; it's like they haven't thought it through."[33] Instead, Nonclassical puts on a more "complete experience," with the music in between the sets being carefully considered as well.

Prokofiev talked about wanting Nonclassical's music to be perceived as serious classical music, and how descriptions like "fusion or "crossover" from the classical crowd can diminish the music's image. He straddles a line between wanting the approval of the classical scene and doing something innovative that some might consider less valid. The label wants its music to be "artistically really credible and hav[e] weight...But if we feel musically that it's solid, then there would never be a problem."[34]

Nonclassical club nights: classical music presented "in a non-classical way"

In July 2010, I traveled to New York City to attend Nonclassical's second appearance at Le Poisson Rouge in Manhattan. The club has been making headlines since it opened in 2008, hosting a wide variety of music spanning classical, jazz, electronic dance music, rock, punk, hip hop, etc. The space typically has tables set up, like a jazz club, and is on the expensive side,[35] but the tables can be taken away to open up the floor

[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Tickets can cost up to 30 dollars, are rarely less that 15, and there is a drink minimum.

for certain shows. The July 21 event featured pianist GéNIA and percussionist Joby Burgess, who performed his Powerplant set.[36] I was surprised to find the tables in place, and some friends and I sat in front. I set up a recording device by the house mixing board and made an ambient recording of the show. The DJ sets, played by Prokofiev, functioned as background music – again, to my surprise – in between the short live sets from GéNIA and Burgess. It was not a normal Nonclassical club night at a familiar club like the Macbeth or the Horse and Groom in London, but it did represent the general format of their shows. Richard Lannoy writes quite clearly, "Dancing never takes place at a conventional Nonclassical night."[37]

The following summer I traveled to London for a series of interviews with Prokofiev, Lannoy, and Nonclassical manager Sam Mackay. The club night that had previously been scheduled was canceled, but they did host a classical event at the Institute of Contemporary Arts on July 7. A string quartet played Steve Reich's *Different Trains* in a black box theater with rows of seats set up, and afterward, the crowd migrated to the "Café Bar," a chic corner of the building where Prokofiev DJed with a laptop (using Ableton Live software) and a small Korg Nanokontrol MIDI device. I was able to stand next to him to see how he DJed and even chat a bit between transitions. Prokofiev had about eight channels of tracks loaded into Live's "Session Mode," the software's interface that allows users to trigger and mix loops or full tracks on the fly. He would simply trigger and fade between tracks using the Nanokontrol, which has nine vertical faders, nine rotary knobs, and 18 buttons that can easily map themselves via MIDI to

[36] Percussionist Joby Burgess performs as Powerplant and released his second album on Nonclassical in 2010, featuring Prokofiev's *Import/Export: Suite for Global Junk* and 12 remixes.
[37] Lannoy, e-mail to the author (2013)

electronic music software. He also used some basic effects in Live, and often overlapped two or three pieces at once. I recall him playing some *Rite of Spring* samples, as well as many of the Nonclassical remixes and looped ambient sections from these remixes. The DJ set was quite relaxed; since there were no dancers depending on him to keep the beat going through the transitions, it was more of an ambient set of music. Prokofiev explains, "In our DJ sets we play a lot of remixes from the Nonclassical record label, as well as contemporary classical music, some left-field electronica, and a few older classics from composers like Stravinsky, Varese and Stockhausen."[38] He has mentioned Alarm Will Sound's *Acoustica*, an album of orchestrated, acoustic Aphex Twin covers, as a favorite. This type of music is much like the Nonclassical remixes, tracks that reference dance music but remain largely in the contemporary classical sound world. He also cites Stravinsky's *Ebony Concerto*[39] and Soviet composer Alexander Mosolov's *Iron Foundry*, an avant-garde, industrial work from 1927,[40] as favorites for DJing. Like the gig at Le Poisson Rouge, the DJing was mainly background music. People were sitting down, drinking and talking, though some in the bar listened intently. Prokofiev describes his DJ sets as part of a culture that has developed, at least in the UK, of "music for dancing but people aren't dancing to it."[41] The DJ sets are also too short to encourage dancing, at only about ten minutes each. As of our 2011 interview, the setup at the monthly Nonclassical nights included tables, not an open dance floor. Instead of invoking a dance club, Nonclassical intends "club night" to connote a relaxed, club environment, sometimes a bar, sometimes a rock or dance music club, as opposed to a more formal concert hall. The

[38] Prokofiev, quoted in El Essawi (2012)
[39] From Prokofiev, personal interview (2011)
[40] El Essawi (2012)
[41] Prokofiev, personal interview (2011)

term “nonclassical” indicates classical music, but presented and explored “in a non-classical way,”[42] engaging in remix culture and substituting the club's social environment for that of the concert hall.

The typical format for Nonclassical club nights includes three to four 20-minute live sets with 10-minute DJ breaks in between. “That helps the concentration for what is often challenging music, especially compared to a concert hall gig, where you might be required to concentrate for an hour or more at a time.”[43] The Nonclassical club night can be seen as an adaptation within the “complicated social dilemma” of classical music today – “as a largely acoustic art in an electronic culture, as a mainly long-form art in a short-attention-span age.”[44] This format gives audience members the freedom to choose how they take in the music, but also builds in frequent breaks so when the live sets are on, people are ready. Matt Fretton describes the unappealing concert hall alternative: “In an art gallery, no one's going to force you to stand in front of a painting you don't like for half an hour. The respect between the audiences and the musicians has to be natural, not enforced."[45]

On my second night in Berlin, on November 28, 2012, Nonclassical was presenting a club night at the relatively new club called Chalet on Schlesische Strasse in Freidrichshain-Kreuzberg, the neighborhood most known for its dance clubs. The event took place in one of Chalet's rooms, a smoky bar in back with couches and a small, open floor and slightly raised stage. The place was tight and packed; people milled about and talked and drank, as in a normal bar, during the DJ sets, but quieted down considerably

[42] Prokofiev, quoted in Allen's interview: Prokofiev (2010)
[43] Prokofiev, quoted in Woodall (2011)
[44] Ross (2010)
[45] Matt Fretton, quoted in Colborne (2008)

when the live sets would start. It was a rather long program, featuring four short sets from cellist Peter Gregson, percussionist Matthias Engler, cellist Stella Veloce, and trumpeter Matthew Conley and double bassist Caleb Salgado, and DJing from Prokofiev and Joey Hansom. Musicians often introduced their pieces to the crowd before playing them. Prokofiev seemed quite happy with the gig and talked about wanting to set up an ongoing Berlin series for Nonclassical.[46]

Prokofiev has said that real-time audience feedback is a good thing for live music; it puts the composition and the performance to a test. "When the music is truly good, people can't help being quiet. You don't have to tell people to be quiet. And if the performance isn't quite up to scratch you can hear a murmur build up."[47] Without this feedback, the absence of which is the norm in classical performance, musicians have a hard time telling how the public feels about the works. Alex Ross talks about jazz club formats, in which people applaud after each improvised solo and after each song. "There may be a hidden correlation between the music's capacity for "rapture" and the audience's capacity to show it."[48] Composers used to be preoccupied with audience reaction. For example, Mozart wrote a letter to his father, describing the 1778 premiere of his "Paris" symphony and basing its success on the crowd's applause and even shouts of "Da Capo."[49] Brahms knew his first piano concerto's premiere in 1859 was not a success because no one clapped after the first two movements.[50] At the Nonclassical nights, the atmosphere was surely more casual than typical concerts, yet people were nearly silent

[46] Nonclassical recently held its second club night at Chalet on September 11, 2013.
[47] Prokofiev, quoted in Toronyi-Lalic (2011)
[48] Ross (2010)
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.

for the live music, not reacting the way nineteenth-century audiences did, nor the way Prokofiev desires. For him, this "real-time audience feedback" may be a goal rather than a reality. Ross notes this same dynamic at Le Poisson Rouge, and pianist Jonathan Biss told him that the audience there is more attentive than any other he had found in New York. For Prokofiev, Biss, and others, it seems that classical concert norms still hold great influence even in alternative spaces.

At Nonclassical's Berlin gig, I was struck by the warm social atmosphere between sets and afterwards. It felt like a new music concert at a university, but with less formality and plenty of smoking and drinking. Some of the audience members I talked with had never heard of Nonclassical, but saw a flier or an online listing and thought it sounded interesting. Also unlike many concerts, most of the instrumentalists hung around and talked with friends and audience members between sets and after the show. It was nice to be able to chat with them about their sets and their careers.

A new, bigger format "to get people dancing"

In January 2012, Nonclassical tried something different. Instead of small-scale chamber music and classical DJs, they brought in a full chamber orchestra and hired a club DJ to "really get people dancing by the end of the night."[51] The show's theme was minimalism, a style, as Prokofiev says, both classical composers and dance producers have explored. Like Meyers, who programmed three club nights featuring remixes of classic American minimalist composers Steve Reich, Philip Glass, and Terry Riley, Prokofiev thought the strong musical affinities and programming opportunities of pairing

[51] Prokofiev, quoted in El Essawi (2012)

minimalism and the club world would be a good way to launch his bigger club format.

The show began with Nonclassical Recordings artist Aisha Orazbayeva playing Reich's *Violin Phase*, and then 12 instrumentalists played John Adams' *Chamber Symphony*. A DJ set linked the first set to the second, which featured Reich's *New York Counterpoint*, for clarinet and pre-recorded sound, and finally, Louis Andriessen's *Workers' Union*. One reviewer noted people being unsure of "when to offer...polite applause as the end [was not] clear until the cellist [gave] the nod and an awkward smile."[52] DJ Richard Lannoy continued with a longer, 45-minute set, and clarinetist Mark Simpson improvised along with the tracks for much of it; Lannoy says this set was geared "more towards functional dancefloor [*sic*] music"[53] than normal. By the time DJ Twitch, from the Optimo party series in Glasgow, came on, only "stragglers...strut[ting] their stuff" were left on the "semi-empty dance floor."[54] However, Lannoy says people did dance more than at typical Nonclassical nights.

Lannoy says his "jam" with the live clarinetist harkened back to the Subvision days, when the DJs would often interact "with the live performer working with new material or arrangements with remixes I'd made, largely in search of creative possibilities as much as presenting a performance for the audience."[55] He writes that "musically, it was a take on Steve Reich's *New York Counterpoint* spliced with Berlin electronica, both demonstrating the commonality between contemporary classical music in the form of American Minimalism and that of dancefloor [*sic*] music."[56]

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[52] Blake (2012)
[53] Lannoy, e-mail to the author (2013)
[54] Blake (2012)
[55] Lannoy, quoted in "2012 Interview with Richard Lannoy" on his website.
[56] Lannoy, e-mail to the author (2013)

Nonclassical put on another big club night at XOYO on April 26, 2012, featuring large-scale, live performances of music from Penderecki, Xenakis, and Ligeti, including Penderecki's *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima*, for 52 stringed instruments,[57] and Xenakis' "Peaux," from his larger percussion sextet, *Pleiades.* Alex Smoke closed the night with an extended DJ set. Other large-scale programs in the works are "German Electronica" and "German Techno."

Mason Bates and Mercury Soul

Mason Bates (b. 1977, Richmond, VA) bought his turntables towards the end of his time in New York City around 2000, while at Juilliard, when he started going to electronic music shows in the Lower East Side. But he did not fully understand the role of the DJ until he moved to San Francisco (to pursue his PhD at the University of California at Berkeley). At that time, the Bay Area hosted what he describes as "this incredible...residual, leftover party scene from the dot com era, that meant that every space had DJs in [it]...I feel like there were more DJs per square inch than pretty much any town."[58] His interest in electronica comes from what he sees as its connection to classical music:

> "Most of it has to do with the fact that electronica doesn't really have a lead vocalist. Without a lead vocalist that takes up a lot of the oxygen of the listener, like lyrics and melody and all that, then the rest of the music is sort of supporting that. But if you take all of that out, then suddenly the rest of the music, like the harmonies, the textures, the rhythms, they have to bump up, and that is kind of what we focus on in concert music."[59]

[57] Nonclassical assembled the full string orchestra for this piece.
[58] Bates, personal interview (2011)
[59] Ibid.

As he was both writing instrumental works and DJing, he noticed the "pregnant possibilities" of combining these two worlds, and decided to try this with *Omnivorous Furniture*, a Los Angeles Philharmonic commission for chamber orchestra. He calls the merging of classical and electronica "a cool musical opportunity," a way for him to do something new and combine two of his musical interests into what he views as "the most original and most captivating music"[60] that he can write.

Bates differentiates his concert works from his Mercury Soul events. In writing these usually electro-acoustic pieces, he does not concern himself with audience demographics; he does it because it works musically. Accordingly, Bates' concert works, while often masterfully composed, have not altered classical concert rituals. Most of his works are written for standard chamber ensembles or full orchestra (with electronica), and his busy concert schedule, with performances by major orchestras like the Chicago Symphony, the San Francisco Symphony, and the Pittsburgh Symphony, is made up of traditional orchestral concert formats. Bates focuses his performance practice innovation on his Mercury Soul events.

Liquid Interface and working with orchestra

In Berlin in 2013, Ari Benjamin Meyers and I talked over lunch near his Kreuzberg studio about the programming of contemporary orchestral pieces. He mentioned the common practice of placing a contemporary work in between two standard Classical or Romantic pieces, a way of sandwiching the new piece in between familiar works that will keep the general orchestral patrons in their seats for the whole

[60] Ibid.

performance. Meyers, in thinking about the audience, commented that this programming order does not prepare the listener for the contemporary work, which may sound out of the ordinary for many audience members. By beginning a concert with a Mozart or a Beethoven piece, an orchestra is setting the tone for the show. Thus, when a vastly different contemporary piece follows, the audience's ears may not be ready for the different techniques and harmonic spaces of the newer work. Finally, when finishing the show with another old classic, the orchestra washes away whatever more modern sounds remain in people's ears.

I decided to look into a few orchestras' programming decisions regarding Bates' music, since he is the most widely performed orchestral composer of the musicians on whom I am focusing. In fact, out of nine concert programs by the Pittsburgh Symphony and the Chicago Symphony that had featured Bates' works at the time of my inquiry, five out of nine opened with a Bates work, and the other four put the Bates piece in the middle. It is my general experience that the contemporary work is placed in the middle, but in Bates' case, this programming may be in large part a result of his pieces being shorter than many classic orchestral works, making them more suitable to fill the "fanfare" role, beginning a concert that could feature, for example, a Tchaikovsky concerto and a Mozart symphony. These orchestral programming decisions may be out of Bates' hands anyway, but in his Mercury Soul nights, when he and conductor Benjamin Shwartz make these calls, the piece selection and order are carefully determined in a different way than with orchestral concerts.

I was able to attend the Winston-Salem Symphony's performance on May 14, 2013. On the program was Bates' *Liquid Interface*, written in 2007, alongside a newly

composed fanfare by Dan Locklair, a twentieth-century work by Alan Hovhaness, and Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Bates' piece certainly stood out among the rest, as the only work with electronica (which he operated himself on MIDI sample pads and laptop), and a drum set, not to mention the sound of his characteristic orchestration. The Bates came after the fanfare and the Hovhaness and before the intermission, so audience members were left thinking or talking about his sound world as they took their break. Involving DJ technology, *Liquid Interface* references electronic dance music rather than engaging it directly, with frequent pulse-less sections and an extended programmatic narrative following water's various states. This performance ended the half, without the audience having recourse to other electronic music (as is the Nonclassical practice), and people returned to their seats after the intermission for the Mussorgsky.

Mercury Soul: "an outreach event"

In contrast to works like *Liquid Interface*, Bates views Mercury Soul as an "outreach event." He wants "to bring classical music to people who haven't encountered it and who think it's too intimidating."[61] In curating a night of contemporary classical music and DJ sets, linked together with his composed transitions, he is changing the experience of classical music.

Bates treats Mercury Soul like a long night at most clubs: each set flows into the next. Typically in clubs, the next DJ will beat-match[62] his or her first track with the

[61] Bates, personal interview (2011)

[62] Mark Butler defines beat matching as a "process whereby a DJ maintains a constant tempo throughout a set. A fundamental skill of EDM mixing; less commonly known as 'beat mixing.' Involves minute adjustments (either positive or negative) to the speed of a record so as to match its tempo to that of the record currently being played. Records are not brought into the mix until they have been beat-matched; the

previous DJ's last track, so the music continues its flow. Sometimes at a club, you may not actually realize that a new DJ came on ten minutes earlier, yet you know the energy or track selection has changed – and when you see a new DJ at the booth, it all makes sense. Bates divides up his nights into three categories: the DJ sets, the classical sets, and the space in between. It is this space in between that connects the DJ sets with the classical ones, quite meticulously, in terms of the music and also the production and lighting. "There will be a five to eight-minute interlude that comes out of a DJ set and…you start to realize that the chamber orchestra is fading in and playing over this new track, and they kind of grow in importance,"[63] Bates explains.

> While that's happening, the lighting is starting to brighten on them, and become more like a concert hall. And the electronics start to fade away. So over those five to eight-minute segments there is a real shift in the space, and it's basically a way to get people to notice the classical musicians and start listening to them before they start their set.[64]

The interludes are mostly written by Bates, with orchestration duties split between Bates and conductor Benjamin Shwartz.

Mercury Soul: Chicago, May 10, 2013

The Mercury Soul event I attended was held at Metro in Chicago. Generally programming rock and hip hop, the club is fairly well-known and features an attractive second-floor club with a large stage and DJ booth. The doors opened at 8:30, and music

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process of adjustment is audible only to the DJ, who listens through headphones" (Butler, 325). Butler writes both "beat match" and "beat-match," and others have used "beatmatch"; I have chosen beat-match, which I think most clear. At times, I extend this term to describe the process in which Bates matches the tempo of his electronic beats to that of the live ensemble, or vice-versa.

[63] Bates, personal interview (2011)

[64] Ibid.

was scheduled to begin at 9:00. See Figure 1 for an estimated timeline of the event.[65] When I arrived at 9:15, a DJ was playing with a live trumpeter in the booth to the right of the stage.[66] The trumpeter was improvising along with the dance music. On the other side of the main stage, in the back left section of the floor, was a smaller stage. When the time for their performance was approaching, a string quartet from the Chicago Symphony and conductor Benjamin Shwartz stepped up on the smaller stage. Bates, who had been standing behind the DJ, quickly took over from the DJ and beat-matched his first composition of the night, an interlude, with the DJ's last track. Bates cued Shwartz, who guided the amplified string quartet as they entered and played the interlude, along with Bates' bass and beats. No one used a click track, and Shwartz relied on Bates' cue and the sound of the beats to keep the players together. After the interlude, there was a pause, in which Shwartz introduced Bartok's second string quartet, performed live and amplified through the club's sound system; a short program note was projected onto a screen on the main stage. The quartet played the second movement of the piece, and the performance was exciting. Something about the harsh Bartok sound worked well through the speakers, in a dark room with active and colored lights, and it was easy to hear the music over the audience's talking and drinking. Throughout the whole show, in fact, there was a constant murmur of people talking, cheering, and going where they pleased when it pleased them, unselfconsciously, but nothing ever interfered with my listening experience. The amplification was loud enough, and the room dark enough, for people to feel anonymous and free to absorb the art how they wanted. This was the most relaxed setting in which I

[65] Page 181. The Chicago Symphony did not allow me to make audio or video recordings or take photographs of this performance. Due to the resulting lack of documentation, the following timeline is an estimate and is not accurate to the minute.
[66] The DJ was presumably DJ Striz and the trumpeter Tom Madeja, based on press information.

have ever heard chamber music, yet my attention usually remained focused on the music, and more so than normal in the case of the programmed instrumental works. I was able to focus harder on the instrumental music because of the social environment that meshes with my generational life experience, adequate amplification and good sound monitors, and the pattern of DJ set/interlude/live set/interlude. My mind wandered much more often during the lengthy Verdi *Requiem* at the Berlin Philharmonie's temple to music.

Next came another electro-acoustic interlude composed by Bates, which began right after the Bartok. It was not much shorter in length than the approximately eight-minute quartet movement. Bates again cued the beginning, and the strings played alongside his bass and beats. Despite Shwartz's conducting, the acoustic sound was often quite behind the electronic beats; with a click track, at least for Shwartz, the acoustic would have synced better with the electronic. During the first few interludes, the electronic sound was only coming from the side of the club where the DJ booth was located, and the instrumental sound came only from the other side, where the instruments played. The two different sound worlds, issuing from opposite sides of the space, did not blend well. Later, the sound engineer must have fixed the problem, because the electronics became much more evenly balanced, powerful and audible, and the conductor was able to stay ahead of the beat.

This interlude led into a DJ set from Bates. The composer-DJ beat-matched the first track of his set to the end of the interlude, creating a subtle transition as the instruments faded out. These interludes, with the fading in and out of the instruments – much like Bates' fading in and out of his beats – succeeded in guiding the audience from one mode of listening to another. As a connection between EDM and instrumental

compositions, they combined the beats of EDM with the live instrumental timbres of the ensemble, effectively leading one's attention from one medium to the other. While I thought the shift in attention from one stage to the DJ booth to another stage and back to the DJ booth would be distracting, it was not, and the pace of the night, with 10- to 20-minute chamber sets and thirty-minute DJ sets, seemed to work. I found myself especially captivated by the instrumental music and interesting transitions.

Bates' DJ set was more energetic than the last, and a small but devoted contingent, maybe ten percent of the attendees, danced close to the DJ booth. Towards the end of the set, some instrumentalists began setting up on the main stage for the next interlude and piece, Biber's *Battalia*, written in 1673. The electronic music ended for an introduction by the conductor. Biber's piece, with its baroque harmonies, repetitive figures, percussive double bass and cello effects (with *col legno* attacks and a piece of paper wedged between strings), and even at times extreme dissonance by way of simultaneous key areas, actually fit well in the program, and did not seem out of place in the club environment.

The next interlude, beginning at about 10:30 PM, led into Bates' second DJ set. People danced a bit more this time, and when Bates threw on Michael Jackson's "Wanna Be Startin' Something," those dancing turned it up a notch. The following interlude had a nice groove to it, and the ensemble was able to stay in sync, which caused the audience to respond visibly better to it. As the interlude ended, the music stopped and the focus shifted upwards to the left balcony, where the clarinetist introduced Stravinsky's *Three Pieces for Clarinet*. He told the audience to quiet down, just for the first movement, which is soft. I did not notice people softening their voices much, but it did not matter;

the amplified clarinet was easy to hear regardless. After the first two movements, with the listeners obviously engaged, the clarinetist said, playfully, “Ready for some...jazz?” People cheered, and he went on to play the last movement. Right after finishing, he took a swing at the microphone with his clarinet, like a baseball batter, which made the audience, already cheering loudly, erupt with more boisterous cheers. In Berlin, I became accustomed to classical music having popular appeal, especially with young people. But rarely in the United States have I seen people so energized by a classical performance.

A DJ set from Searchl1te, with Dominic Johnson on electric viola, followed. Eventually the DJ set blended into a full ensemble interlude with the Chicago Symphony musicians participating. Towards the end of another DJ set, which included a trumpeter playing from the right balcony, the onstage screen read, “Bates upcoming,” and the full ensemble and conductor waited onstage, somewhat awkwardly, for Bates' cue. By then it was nearly midnight, and the club had cleared out a bit. Bates executed one final beat-match, syncing the upcoming interlude's beats with the DJ's last track. After the interlude, Bates introduced his new piece for large ensemble and electronics, *The Rise of Exotic Computing*, which he “designed for tonight.” The piece had a false start, as “technical problems” caused them to start it over (most likely, the electronic sound was not playing through the speakers). The piece was interesting, and quite pulse-based, and it was followed by a lengthy electro-acoustic interlude (or “outro,” since it was the final one), from which the next and final DJ took over from the booth. When I left, at about 12:30, the DJ was still playing and plenty stuck around to dance or talk.

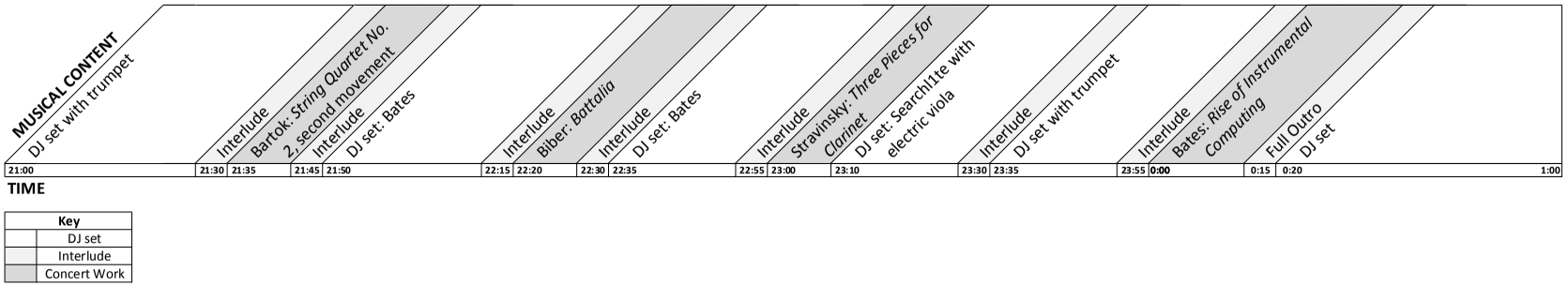

Figure 1: Estimated timeline of Mercury Soul, held at Metro in Chicago on May 10, 2013.

Comparison with EDM club nights

Can a Mercury Soul party or Nonclassical club night be likened to a typical EDM party, which features a number of DJs, playing back to back? The two phenomena are quite different, as many DJ sets, and often whole parties at dance clubs, feature minimal tempo and even genre shifts. Interviewed in Mark Butler's *Unlocking the Groove*,[67] DJ Shiva tells the author that listeners need a "symphonic mentality" to appreciate a DJ set, as the individual tracks cohere together to form one long work. Unlike a symphony, however, sets are largely improvised, and whether or not the DJ has a predetermined form or even a set list, she must be able to "turn on a dime," or shift gears quickly based on audience response. Butler likens the DJ set to a train journey with an unknown destination in which passengers can see out the window the whole ride. In other words, the listener (and often the DJ) does not know what will come next, but he can follow each event as it comes in the lengthy, flowing form. Within a set, DJs value growth and energy climaxes, though sets normally have multiple high points, usually based on texture and intensity rather than thematic material. DJ Shiva refers to this structure as "peaks and valleys."[68] DJs do vary tempo over the course of a set, but techno artists, for example, usually keep the beats-per-minute range fairly small. Some try not to increase the tempo at all, and only do this subconsciously, but others do go for peaks and valleys of tempo as well as overall intensity.

At Nonclassical nights, the DJ and classical sets do not overlap, and both types of

[67] Butler (2005)

[68] This relates back to the earlier discussion of Robert Fink's teleology analysis. He considers long structures of peaks and valleys more akin to feminine orgasmic rhythms, while more traditional Western, goal-directed forms mirror the single male climax. In terms of gender studies, Fink sees these forms as more progressive for their resistance of phallocentrism in music.

sets are widely varied in tempo and genre. Mercury Soul features beat-matching by Bates and elaborate interludes between DJ and instrumental sets, yet within the latter, pieces also vary in terms of style and tempo and are sometimes separated by silence or verbal introductions. Thus, Mercury Soul makes strong reference to the typical dance club format, but the combination of instrumental and DJ sets and electro-acoustic interludes results in a hybrid format, neither full-fledged dance party nor recital.

"A context they understand": more Klassik im Klub

In Germany alone there are a number of ongoing club classical events. "Klassik im Klub," a night with classical sets and DJs, began in Munich in 2009. The Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin has a similar event that takes place in the Berlin Philharmonie, the main orchestral hall in the city, beginning slightly later than normal and costing a little less. Kulturradio, of Rundfunk Berlin-Branderburg, a public broadcasting network, hosts "Classic Lounge" events at the popular Watergate club, starting early, at 7:30 PM, but costing only five euros. Berlin has also seen two Club Contemporary Classical festivals featuring new music that exists "in the grey zone" between classical and electronic dance, performed at the famous Berghain techno club and Radialsystem V, a converted pump station. Kiez Opera, which features opera and vocal performances in non-traditional venues, recently tied together a number of different vocal works into a loose narrative of "insanity" at Stattbad, a swimming pool-turned-club in the Wedding neighborhood of Berlin. The list goes on with other gig series in the UK and elsewhere. One of the oldest, perhaps second only to Subvision in London, is the Yellow Lounge.

Yellow Lounge: The Yellow Label's flirtation with popular culture

Known for its extensive output of classical music albums, Deutsche Grammophon began hosting classical club nights in Hamburg, Germany in 2001. It expanded to Berlin the following year, and Dresden and Frankfurt in 2004, and has since begun regular nights in London, Amsterdam, and Seoul. Recognizing that the majority of concert hall audiences were older patrons, the original Yellow Lounge Berlin team of Christian Kellersmann, David Canisius, Per Hauber and Martin Hossbach wanted to appeal to younger people with a concept of "live music, but not a concert." Since Berlin had a thriving club scene, they decided to stage these events at some of the best and most legendary clubs in the city; over the years, gigs have taken place in clubs such as Cookies, Berghain, Asphalt, Weekend, Arena, and Maria am Ostbahnhof. Yellow Lounge producer Felix Mesenburg states the same thing that Prokofiev has said about classical music: most of the generational disconnect is not the music itself, but the concert setting. "Put it in a context they understand and they will come and listen."[69]

Yellow Lounge events are known for situating traditional classical and romantic music, both from the DJs and live performers, in dance clubs. The live performances always come from Deutsche Grammophon artists who have recently released albums on the label; these tend to feature tonal, instrumental music. As for the DJs, they have one rule: they must only spin classical music, with no beats or electronic music. "It's Bach and Beethoven, but it can also be Reich and Glass," says Mesenburg. "You have a huge range that you can select from, and usually you will hear all of that on a Yellow Lounge

[69] Toronyi-Lalic (2011)

night."[70] At a 2011 show in Amsterdam, a reviewer recounts the selections from the DJ sets, which he said were way too loud: an excerpt from *Swan Lake*, a minute of medieval chant, a portion of Mozart's C-minor Mass, the storm scene from Wagner's *Die Walkurie,* Puccini's *Turandot.* A live act that night, however, played three twentieth-century pieces. A blogger reviewing the London debut of Yellow Lounge in July 2011 wrote that the DJing was in fact too soft, and the selections of tonal classical music could have been more "loud and energized," more conducive to audibility over a talking and drinking crowd.[71] Mesenburg, a DJ himself for Yellow Lounge, says one must always be careful and have a hand on the fader to account for the wide dynamic range of instrumental music. From reviews and personal experiences, it is hard to determine whether even the most attentive classical DJ can truly make a series of classical recordings sound even and clear over a dance club sound system. Unlike Nonclassical DJs, Yellow Lounge DJs rarely mix or overlap successive songs; Mesenburg notes that doing so is nearly impossible because of the dynamics and tonality. This comparison suggests either that the Nonclassical remixes, often with beat-driven rhythms or electronically manipulated ambient textures, are easier to beat-match or overlap with other similar tracks than tonal, classical music; or that Nonclassical DJs are typically more adventurous than those with Yellow Lounge. After the final act, however, Yellow Lounge DJs are free to experiment by incorporating electronic music and other genres into their sets. The events usually run until at least 1:00 AM.

I attended the May 7, 2013 Yellow Lounge event at the Gretchen club in Berlin, starting at 9:00 PM. The interior of Gretchen was beautiful, with a stage set up in the

[70] Mesenburg, personal interview (2013)
[71] Ceciline (2013)

middle of the dance floor amid the interior's columns and three projection screens. One screen had video of the live performance, and the two others had graphic video (operated by VJ ma.beat). A grand piano, a music stand, and two microphones were set up onstage. Featured that night was the young Austrian clarinetist, Andreas Ottensamer, with pianist José Gallardo. When I entered at about 9:15 PM, two DJs, Clé[72] and Eva Be, were trading off tracks using CDJ racks. They spun often tonal classical or romantic music, sometimes fusion or a classical-electronica mix. The sound quality was decent but hard to hear at times because of the musical selections' wide dynamic range.

As blogger "ceciline" also found at the 2011 London debut of Yellow Lounge, the venue was very aesthetically pleasing, the show was packed, and, despite taking place in a dance club, the set-up was similar to that of an independent pop gig.[73] There were some seats, folding chairs on one side of the stage, and cushioned cubes on the other, but not nearly enough for everyone. Many people saved seats, or stood right next to their seat, and were quite protective of them. Because of the nature of the event as a recital, many people ended up sitting at the bar, facing away from the bar to look at the stage. With the whole main bar full of seated people, there was no way to order a drink without either asking people to move their stools aside or peering awkwardly past them, hoping the bartender saw you. This does not happen often at dance clubs, when people are more inclined to dance on the floor than sit at the bar for extended periods.

The setting was more relaxed than a recital hall, but less so than a typical bar or dance club. Forced to stand because of the lack of seating, I was surprised to realize that

[72] DJ Clé is one half of the Märtini Brös, who played at Ari Benjamin Meyers' Club Redux/Steve Reich night at Watergate in 2005, which I attended.
[73] Ceciline (2013)

while waiting for the set to start, and even during the set, I would have preferred to sit down and did not have that option. With beatless music, my body had nothing to do, and I noticed my legs getting tired and wished the first set had started earlier. The blogger from *The Biting Point* notes exactly the same complaint.[74] The 30-minute break between sets felt too long.

The clarinet and piano set was fun. A clarinet player myself, I enjoyed hearing some familiar pieces that I have played in the past, such as the first of Gershwin's *Three Preludes* and the final movement of Poulenc's *Clarinet Sonata*, and a clarinet and piano arrangement of Debussy's dreamy prelude, "La fille aux cheveux de lin" ("The Girl with the Flaxen Hair"). The 23-year-old clarinetist was quite good and fun to watch. Still, the program, consisting of movements from five pieces, featured no contemporary works. It seemed jarring that in a new setting for instrumental music, no "new" music made it into the live sets, and even the DJed music sounded from an earlier era. "Ceciline" echoes this criticism, pointing out the "hypocrisy in reinventing performance contexts...without in anyway [*sic*] trying to bring the repertoire up to date."[75]

Drawing clubbers into the concert hall?

While a full grasp of the efficacy of the composers' goals to broaden contemporary concert music is beyond the scope of my study, I observed significant interest in the composed pieces presented at Mercury Soul. In fact, after a particularly beat-heavy interlude and an ensemble in sync with the kick drum sounds, the heightened, pulse-based energy seemed to transform itself into enthusiasm for the next piece. Without

[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.

interviewing a large cross section of the crowd, I could not gauge how many listeners were newcomers to contemporary classical music, and how many came for the Bartok, Biber, or Bates. Asked if people are inspired to buy a symphony ticket after attending Mercury Soul, conductor Benjamin Shwartz says, "That's the million dollar question. We don't have really the research tools in place to know."[76] He has talked to people after a show who had never heard of a composer performed that night, and who ask where they can find a recording of the piece. But he does not know if Mercury Soul is awakening people to contemporary classical, providing an isolated, innovative experience, or primarily attracting people already interested in the genre. Shwartz says the social goal of the shows is to win a wider audience, and his greatest reward is when someone approaches him and says, "'Wow, I didn't know that this music existed and what it was, and it was an eye-opening experience.'"[77]

Most of the audience at a 2008 Nonclassical event at The Macbeth was described by one reviewer as "not new to classical music...either students or working in the music industry," yet almost all under 30.[78] Emil Blake describes the audience at the 2012 large-scale Nonclassical event as an "even mix of classical fans and younger gig-goers," many "unfamiliar with what's being played" who "have come through curiosity and intrigue."[79] Of the 2011 Yellow Lounge event in London, the blogger notes a crowd "not *that* young," with a group of visibly older listeners sitting on cushions in the middle of the venue.[80] She perceived the crowd as classical industry insiders, musicians, and classical music

[76] Shwartz, personal interview (2013)
[77] Ibid.
[78] Colborne (2008)
[79] Blake (2012)
[80] Ceciline (2013)

fans.

Of the audiences in different cities, Shwartz says they vary widely. Chicago's crowd is his favorite, an audience that wants something "hard and interesting...edgy...and something they wouldn't hear normally."[81] In Miami, which he calls "a different world," he says the programming had to be catered towards the vein of Steve Reich, minimalist music that Shwartz likens to pop music and calls "really cool," but "not really mind-expanding."[82] Shwartz lives in Berlin, though Mercury Soul has not yet taken place there, and he says the city is "way out there, and people are reverent in their silence...you can stretch your turtle's tongue on sandpaper and you will have 300 people listening."[83] It is this reverence and open-mindedness towards the arts that allows for a huge, diverse musical scene in the city, including avant-garde concerts, weekend-long minimal techno parties, and popular instrumental-EDM events featuring the Redux Orchestra or the Brandt Brauer Frick Ensemble.

Both Shwartz and Mesenburg say their goal is not to shift classical music from concert halls to clubs over time. "We are not trying to set up a separate culture of classical music that has nothing to do with the concert halls," says Mesenburg. "It's just, we want to open the music up to a younger public, that's all. I don't think that in maybe 20 years, classical music will only be performed in clubs – that's not the goal, that's not the aim. It's actually all about the music."[84] However, Mesenburg does note that classical music performance practice has already changed quite a bit and could certainly change more. Concert ritual was much different "before it became this high cultural

[81] Shwartz, personal interview (2013)
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Mesenburg, personal interview (2013)

elite...expensive thing, for well-situated people and culturally educated people to take part in…So maybe one day if there's not enough people who like to go to the Philharmonie and behave well," things could completely change.[85]

As opposed to commercially focused clubs, Yellow Lounge picks venues that "are really based in the Berlin music scene" and are known for "caring about the music."[86] Mesenburg says fans of commercial dance music often are not going to be interested in classical music. His target audience is "a cultivated, culturally educated crowd who really likes to have good quality entertainment."[87] Shwartz likes the flexibility of having chamber music take place in a club, showing that it can "live in other spaces...it's just a way of trying to show that this music is not about wearing wigs and wearing suits and being fancy and hoity-toity."[88]

Their project may, with respect to the classical music canon, remain on the margins, because of the canon's standard of respect towards masterworks of the repertory via acoustically optimal, reverent listening environments. But the dynamics of creative culture also demand change, and it is clear that artists and classical music-presenting organizations have noticed a large audience thirsty for entirely different concert rituals and are eager to find something new that resonates with youth and popular music culture.

Discussing the "No-Applause Rule" in his book, *Musicking*, Christopher Small writes that, by listening to music in complete silence, "we no longer feel ourselves to be

[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Mesenburg, personal interview (2013)
[88] Shwartz, personal interview (2013)

part of the performance but listen to it as it were from the outside."[89] The sounds we make are no longer part of the performance, but merely interruptions. We are spectators and not participants. Those unaccustomed to classical settings are apt to feel like detached observers, especially in the rarified atmosphere I witnessed at the Berlin Philharmonic's performance of Verdi's *Requiem*. Prokofiev, Bates, Shwartz, Mesenburg and others in the club classical world, with their innovations in classical music performance practice, are actually trying to reconnect with past modes of performance as well as exploring the possibilities of the future. They strive to bring the audience back into participation by condoning the clinking of glasses, boisterous cheering, or commenting to a friend; by placing events in spaces that make younger people feel more comfortable; by having the musicians address the audience directly with onstage introductions of the pieces; and even, in some cases, encouraging people to dance.

[89] Small, quoted in Ross (2005). In *Musicking* (1998), Small defines "musicking" as taking part "in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing." Musicking represents the set of relationships found within all aspects of a musical act.

Part 2: Comprehensive Hybridity in Instrumental-EDM

"The most radical thing that was left for us to do was to expose techno (its chief feature being the loop) to long-term developments of form, whilst at the same time breathing new life into rhythmically stunted contemporary classical, with the rhythmical possibilities which only become possible through a clear metric structure. Beyond overcoming dogma the central problem remains: one always has too little expertise in the opposing area...And so, understandably, most attempts as yet haven't managed to be more than a flirtation with the other side. To fail according to the criteria of at least one side (if not both) is truly hard to avoid."

-Stefan Goldmann[90]

As the performance of records gained importance in music venues from the 1940s through the 1970s, the DJ went "from unskilled worker to artist."[91] It was not until the mid-1970s that DJs began to build fan bases and gain acceptance as musicians and personalities of their own. This coincided with the height of disco, the beginning of hip hop, and a few years later, the origins of techno and house. DJs had replaced live bands as the main source of entertainment for social dance.[92]

When DJs first started spinning records for entertainment, they did not create their own original music, but experimentation with DJ techniques and turntablism led to new music and styles. The invention of devices like samplers and drum machines added to DJs and producers' creative arsenal and encouraged more original composition.

In the early years of DJ practice, it was rare for acoustic instruments to be seen alongside turntables or electronic hardware. But as DJs and producers made more original music and performed it "live,"[93] the DJ/producer evolved from someone to hear

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[90] Goldmann (2011)
[91] See Sarah Thornton's *Club Cultures* (1996) for a detailed history of records and the DJ.
[92] See Thornton (1996): 45.
[93] Mark Butler defines "live PA" as "a live performance in which a producer manipulates studio technology in real time to (re)create his or her own music. Fans and musicians almost always use the term in this abbreviated form; some claim that "PA" stands for "performance artist," whereas others give its meaning as "public appearance" (Butler, 326). "Live" is often used in place of "live PA."

into someone to watch. As the DJ's role became more performative and rock and pop acts incorporated more electronics into their studio productions and live setups, the stage was set for some more unlikely musical combinations. It took a long time for classically trained composers to begin combining their composition with EDM styles and dance club practices. But in the city of Berlin, with its long history of classical music and EDM, such innovation was bound to occur.

Instrumental-EDM: The Naming of a Practice

The German Newspaper *Die Ziet* has called Meyers' work "a completely new music that does not even have a name yet."[94] Brandt Brauer Frick's music is often termed "instrumental techno."[95] The musical practice of interest in this chapter includes a fusion of musical styles and a confluence of cultures, making it difficult to name.

It was tempting to name this practice after its venue, in line with a long tradition of doing so, from chamber music to disco (after discotheques),[96] house (named after the famous Warehouse club in Chicago), garage (after the Paradise Garage in New York City), and dancehall. Yet the music under consideration exists not only in clubs but at times in concert halls and constitutes a musical and social hybrid.

Despite utilizing mainly acoustic instruments, my research subjects' music conforms to numerous EDM idioms, including nearly constant pulse, dance tempos, repetition, powerful bass, and often static or slow-moving harmony. Thus, I have chosen to name this practice "instrumental-EDM." The term "instrumental" could be problematic

[94] Müller (2009). Web: "eine vollkommen neue Musik, die noch nicht einmal einen Namen hat."
[95] Mixmag, the Village Voice and Bleep.com have all called the group's music "instrumental techno."
[96] The venue term disco is derived from its main form of entertainment, the disc (or record). Discotheque is a French word that translates to "record library."

in this context; in classical music, it refers to non-vocal works, and in hip hop to beats without rhymes.[97] Here, I have decided to use it literally, indicating acoustic instruments, keyboards, guitars and bass (whether electric or acoustic) played live. As I use it, "instrumental" references instruments that are often used in non-electronic music such as classical or rock (amplification aside) and not usually associated with EDM. I have concluded that the word instrumental is the best option to reference the incorporation of concert or rock instruments within EDM practice. "Acoustic" would be misleading, as most of the music I am dealing with amplifies all instruments. While music in this practice can contain electronic instruments, such as MIDI hardware, synthesizers, laptops, or drum machines, it maintains an emphasis on (originally) acoustic instruments.

Therefore, by choosing the terms EDM and instrumental, I will refer to this new practice, which Ari Benjamin Meyers and Brandt Brauer Frick have helped forge, as instrumental-EDM.

From Concert to Club: Ari Benjamin Meyers and the Redux Orchestra

"If [a performance takes place] in a concert hall, then it should include the whole situation and it should be a real decision to have that situation. Not because it's the only situation that's available."

-Ari Benjamin Meyers[98]

Meyers (b. 1972, New York) arrived in Berlin in 1996 on a Fulbright scholarship for opera conducting. Before that, he had studied composition at Juilliard pre-college,

[97] In other words, a hip hop instrumental is a backing track on top of which rappers rap. There is also an entire blanket genre today called instrumental hip hop that bypasses lyrics in place of more developed beats and accompaniment. One subgenre is "trap," which combines EDM production with a southern American hip hop, often "crunk," instrumental style. Obviously the web of sub- and micro-genres is ever more complex.

[98] Sala (2013)

composition and conducting at Yale, and then earned a Master's degree in conducting at Peabody Conservatory. After a year on the Fulbright, and a Fulbright extension, he kept agreeing to new projects and ended up making his career in Berlin.

Meyers got involved in the club scene for two main reasons: first, he wanted to explore electronic dance music and work with DJs. Being in Berlin, with a massive dance music culture, he eventually became curious. Meyers describes frequently meeting electronic musicians at bars and clubs during his first few years in the city. "In Berlin, it seems much easier to meet totally different people and talk to them...people have ways of meeting and cross-pollinating...I was just suddenly meeting all these people."[99] His second reason for entering the club world was an aversion to the old concert rituals of classical music.

> I had been getting more and more sort of frustrated and fed up with...a kind of contemporary music scene that was essentially happening in concert halls that were three hundred years old, happening in a situation that hasn't changed in hundreds of years. Basically you have a concert on a stage in front of an audience, and the lights go down and maybe you have a little variation, but basically you have a kind of setup that was completely...uninteresting and completely uninspiring. I had no interest in writing music for this situation, for this kind of space.[100]

Meyers describes contemporary classical music as "a bit of a ghetto," and these concerts, which feature "the same kind of music for the same audience in the same kind of situation," as "conservative and old-fashioned."[101] In contrast, the club environment was especially interesting and attractive to Meyers, and he had not seen anything else happening along the lines of his projects.

[99] Meyers, personal interview (2011)
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.

In addition, Meyers gravitated towards the people he found to really love music; they happened to include many DJs. People "would stay up all night talking about a favorite record,"[102] a passion Meyers had trouble finding within Berlin's classical scene. And he would go to shows, both rock and electronic, and find "the immediacy of being with the audience, the excitement, the energy; being with people who love to make the music."[103] That is how he wanted to make music.

The Redux Orchestra

"The basic idea behind the Redux Orchestra is to produce new compositions fusing different musical genres that do not normally coexist and to create live performances that break musical conventions."

-Liner notes to *Redux Orchestra versus Einstuerzende Neubauten* (2006)

Meyers' format is different from that of Prokofiev or Bates. In orchestrating remixes of classical and electronic works, or with his original piece, *Symphony X*, he is creating live, acoustic (though amplified, and sometimes electroacoustic) works primarily for dancing. Unlike Prokofiev and Bates, the goal is not to expose people to classical music who would not ordinarily choose to hear it, or even to expose classical fans to club culture, but to create a hybrid music that is, first and foremost, dance music and follows the Berlin club format. Meyers talked about his goals for these nights in our interview:

> When I first thought about doing it and started doing it, the form was just as important as the music, so the first rule I said was, ok, when I talked to people about it I said, 'the main point is, it's a club night'...the first rule was that it's a real – it's a club night. Whatever happens, however the club night works – from the time, starting at midnight, and going till nine in the morning, from the drinking, and from

[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.

> everything, not telling people to be quiet, and that they dance – that was super important to me.[104]

The Club Redux series at the Watergate club, located in the popular neighborhood of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg in Berlin, consisted of Meyers and the Redux Orchestra, often with the help of sound engineers such as Max Loderbauer and Robert Henke, performing live remixes of music by American minimalist composers and electronic groups such as Philip Glass, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, Einstürzende Neubauten, The Orb, and Sun Electric. After the Redux Orchestra's live set, there would be multiple DJ sets. Meyers says he thinks there were nine different programs, some which were done once and others twice,[105] between 2005-06.

The Einstürzende Neubauten show, the fifth Club Redux event, was recorded live and released on Potomak Records in 2006. It took place on November 9, 2005 and featured seven acoustic instruments, two keyboards, electronics, and the four members of Einstürzende Neubauten. Meyers was musical director and keyboardist, and the rest of the lineup was Max Loderbauer on electronics and keyboard; Bettina Matt, saxophones and flute; Max Hacker, saxophones and bass clarinet; Kathrin Wagner, saxophones; Paul Brody, trumpet and flugelhorn; Rob Gutowski, trombone and alphorn (an enormous wooden horn originally used by mountain-dwellers in Switzerland, France, and other European countries); Jan Tilman Schade, cello; Meta Huepner, violin; and Einstürzende Neubauten: Blixa Bargeld, vocals; Alexander Hacke, electric bass; N. U. Unruh, percussion; and Jochen Arbeit, electric guitar. The album consists of four songs for a total of 35 and one half minutes.

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[104] Meyers, personal interview (2011)

[105] Meyers' website lists eight different shows and has information about seven of these. Very little additional information is available online.

Joint efforts with Einstürzende Neubauten, The Orb, and Sun Electric epitomized Meyers' ideals at the time. And as he branched out into art and film, he continued and expanded on his desire to work closely with other artists. “I'm a big fan of collaboration, and it's something I've really pursued...because to me it's a very modern way of working. Especially for those of us in the classical world, especially as a composer, it's a bit foreign.”[106] But he says he has seen plenty of projects fail, sometimes because of dynamics between people, and sometimes when someone accustomed to “constructing sound over time” was missing. “[My] conservative part comes out...I do believe that there is a craft to writing successfully longer forms. There's also a craft to writing a beautiful song...but it's different when you're suddenly dealing with an orchestra, and you're dealing with big forces, and you're dealing with a bigger chunk of time.”[107] Some of his own projects themselves have not produced a satisfactory result, but Meyers says these failures are an important part of the creative process. “You also have to fail. You have to think big, try things, and have it totally not work out.”[108]

The Redux Orchestra of 2005-06 was “a pool of musicians” that Meyers built up over time, as finding players particularly suited for rigorous, late night music was not easy, even in Berlin. The project required instrumentalists who were excellent performers, able to improvise, did not mind very loud music, and were open to electronics and amplification. Meyers encountered many classical musicians who would say, “oh, it's too loud”[109] or who were not interested in an all-night gig. “They were crazy nights, because some of them did go from 11 until 8 in the morning, so you need

[106] Meyers, personal interview (2011)
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.

musicians who are up for that."[110] In the *Symphony X* years, the orchestra had coalesced into a set group of about 17 musicians.

Electronic musician Max Loderbauer explained that the Sun Electric Club Redux night began a little differently than most club nights. The opening set paired ambient Sun Electric works with Arvo Pärt string quartets. The bar was closed and refrigerators turned off so as not to interfere with the relatively quiet music. "It was totally silent. It was really, really good."[111] Berlin-based Robert Henke, one of the developers of Ableton Live and an electronic musician under the name Monolake, mixed sound that night.

When Meyers was planning his Club Redux series, he approached Loderbauer because he wanted an electronics component; someone had recommended that Meyers consult with him. Loderbauer collaborated on the Reich, The Orb, Einstürzende Neubauten and Sun Electric shows at Watergate. He comes from a musical family; his mother was an opera singer and his father studied music before switching careers. Loderbauer is a pianist and took lessons for twenty years. At age 16, he got his first synthesizer, a Moog Prodigy, which led him to study sound engineering and find work in a studio in Munich. There, he met Tom Thiel, and in the late 1980s they formed Sun Electric, an adventurous electronic music group. Loderbauer manned live sequencing and synthesizers. He has since been part of the Moritz Von Oswald Trio and worked extensively with Riccardo Villalobos.

Meyers worked with DJs so their sets would integrate well into the Club Redux night, based on its featured composer or group, while giving them freedom to do what they were best at and play extended sets. Instrumentalists cannot play for eight or ten

[110] Ibid.
[111] Loderbauer, personal interview (2013)

hours, so the DJs had to spin their electronic dance sets to make these events true, lengthy club nights. Meyers ended up playing arranger, conductor, and booking agent. Planning the DJs and managing the club nights "was as important in a way as the music."[112]

At the time of our interview, Meyers said he had never come across another project like his. He mentioned Brandt Brauer Frick, whom he had seen play in their live trio setup, as something related, but not the same. He had not yet seen or heard the Brandt Brauer Frick Ensemble. Despite some overlap in players between the Redux Orchestra, Brandt Brauer Frick, and even Nonclassical club nights, there does not appear to be much creative exchange between my research subjects. Paul Frick, who knows Max Loderbauer, had not heard of Meyers or Nonclassical Records. Bates had vaguely heard about Prokofiev but was not terribly familiar and did not appear to know of Meyers. It seems that Meyers' minimal publicity, resistance to documentation in favor of live events, and more recent turn towards the art world has kept his name and reputation somewhat obscure in music circles. One purpose of this dissertation is to group these disconnected artists together, based on their related musical practices, and analyze their productions side by side.

Symphony X

In 2007, Meyers began plans to expand the Redux Orchestra into a group of 17 musicians to perform his new composition, *Symphony X*. The instrumentation consists of violin (which he often doubled with a second violin), cello, soprano saxophone, alto

[112] Meyers, personal interview (2011)

saxophone, tenor saxophone, two baritone saxophones, trumpet, trombone, tuba, electric guitar, electric bass, keyboard, drums and electronics. Also key is the sound technician, as all instruments are typically amplified. Totaling over 65 minutes in four movements, *Symphony X* maintains a tempo of 120 beats-per-minute from start to finish. The style is more akin to rock than EDM and the music rarely pauses for a breath. "In a way it's very conventional in the sense that there's a score, there are parts, it's not improvised...in fact, every measure in some way is different."[113] The expanded Redux Orchestra performed shows and released an album of the work on the Potomak label in 2009.

Meyers describes the electronics part, which he created with Loderbauer, as "old-fashioned."[114] The part is not notated in the score and is optional. Sound is generated entirely from processing of live input and adds what Meyers characterizes as "an important layer," though subtle. "It's a sound; it's something that I think you feel sometimes more than hear."[115] One can pick out the electronics in many of the places where the instruments drop out; electronic reverbs or looped rhythms often echo in these spaces. Listen to Excerpt 1 on the *Composers on the Decks* website for an example of audible electronics towards the end of the first movement.[116] Loderbauer explained to me that he created a Max/MSP patch which he calls "Heisenberg." It gives him the ability to do real-time looping and processing of incoming sound, often involving delay and frequency filtering. In one performance, Loderbauer and Meyers included three- to four-minute electronic interludes between movements.

Symphony X's first movement (Part 1) and much of the entire piece feature two

[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.
[116] http://composersonthedecks.org/companion

syncopated, eighth-note rhythmic patterns that, when combined, form hocketed composite rhythms. In Figure 2, below, I have bracketed the main patterns as Pattern A and Pattern B; Patterns A and B represent all accented notes in the instrumental parts and omit all unaccented notes. Two groups, one higher pitched (soprano saxophone, alto saxophone, trumpet, violin, and first baritone saxophone) and one lower pitched (tenor saxophone, trombone, tuba, electric bass, cello, and second baritone saxophone) play mostly hocketed rhythms – based on their accent or rest patterns – to form a repeating, composite rhythm of 1 + 2 + 2 quarter-note beats. The four-bar, repeated tom pattern in the drums and electric guitar fills in many of the eighth-note rests left empty by the two larger groups of instruments. The superimposed four- and five-bar cycles will not coincide until the twenty-first measure, but Meyers cuts off and restarts these cycles before they reach this point.

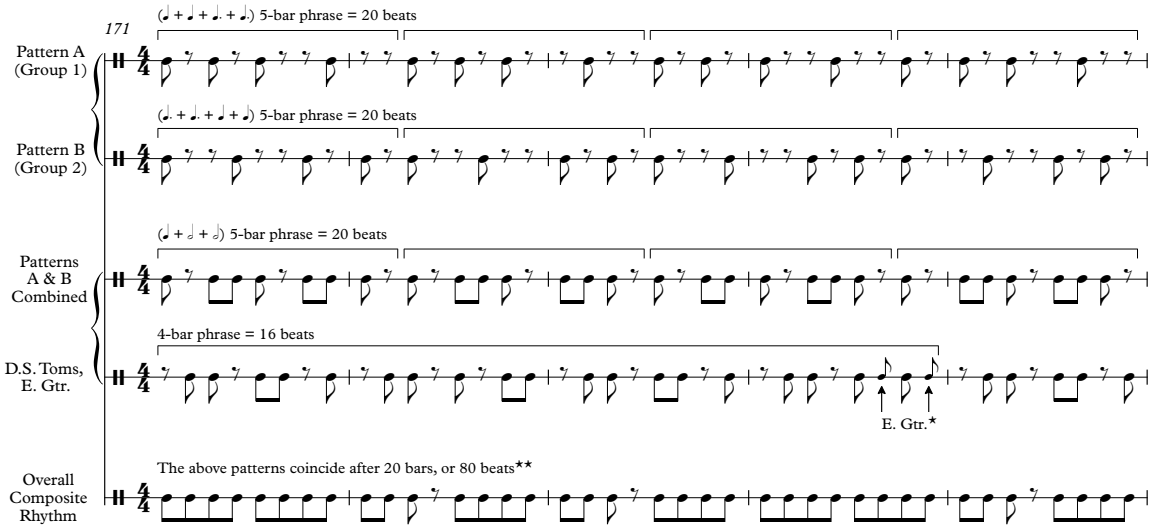
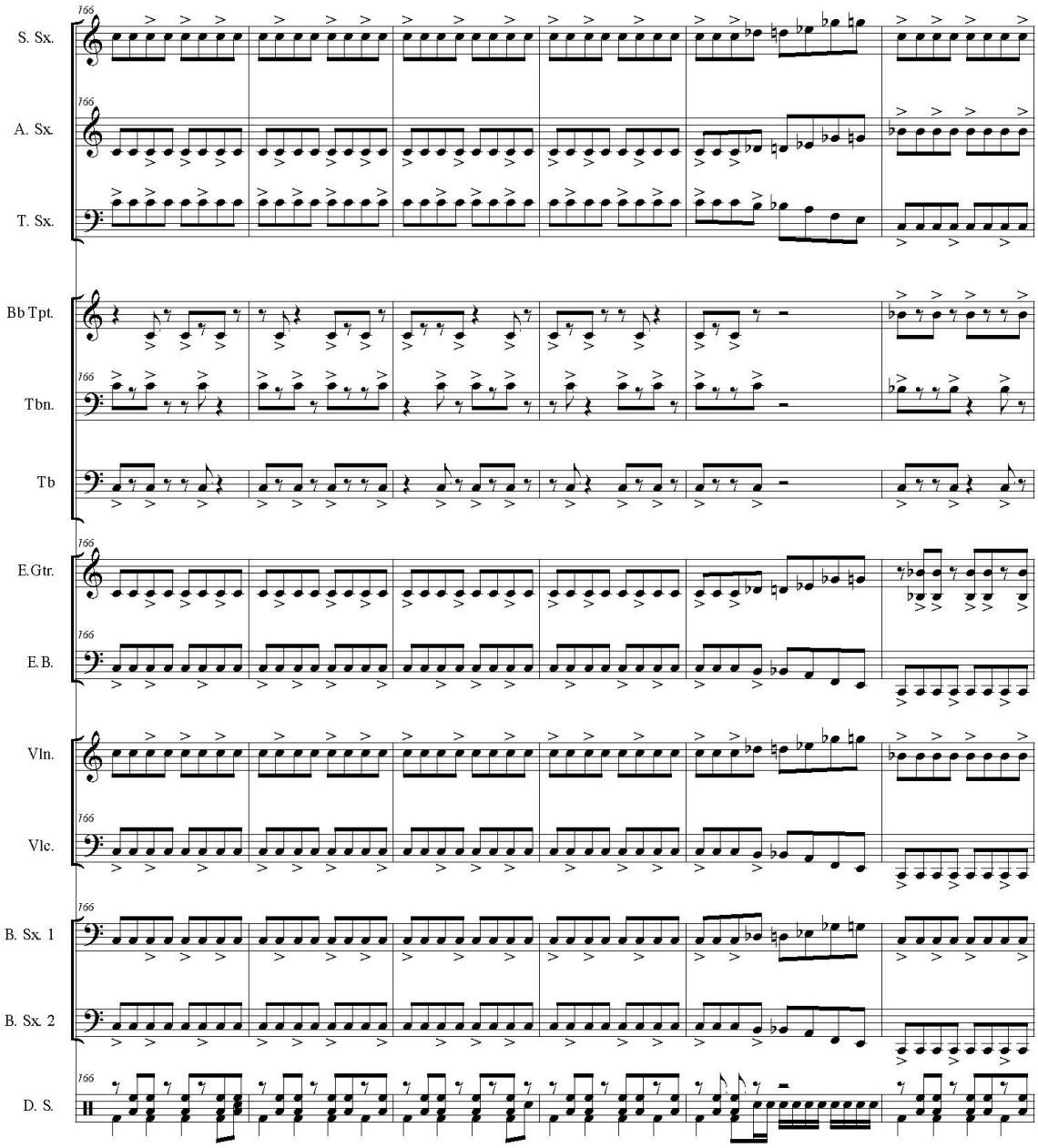


Figure 2: Rhythmic groupings in *Symphony X*, Part 1, mm. 171-175.[117,118]

[117] *Electric guitar doubles the drum set's toms from mm. 171-175 except for two eighth-notes in m. 174, as indicated, when the toms are silent and the electric guitar plays the only accented notes of the whole ensemble.

[118] **The composer cuts off and restarts the cycles before reaching this point.

Frequent unison figures and often homophonic writing make changes in bass notes quite striking. The vast use of unison and octave doubling, and the combination of string, saxophone, brass, electric guitar and bass timbres along with the electronics, create a robust, deep sound. Tightly wound snare and tom drums contribute crisp attacks to the already heavily accented style, and a four-on-the-floor kick drum often pounds away. Figure 3 demonstrates this four-on-the-floor kick drum (bottom staff). Listen to Excerpt 2 on the *Composers on the Decks* website (mm. 165-177). From measure 166 through the beginning of m. 170, all pitched instruments play a concert C, in various octaves, and starting in m. 171, a Bb is introduced in five of the instruments (alto saxophone, trumpet, trombone, electric guitar, and violin), spanning both hocketing groups. Here, the electric guitar shifts to double the drums' tom rhythm.


166
S. Sx.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
Bb Tpt.
Tbn.
Tb
E.Gtr.
E.B.
Vln.
Vlc.
B. Sx. 1
B. Sx. 2
D. S.

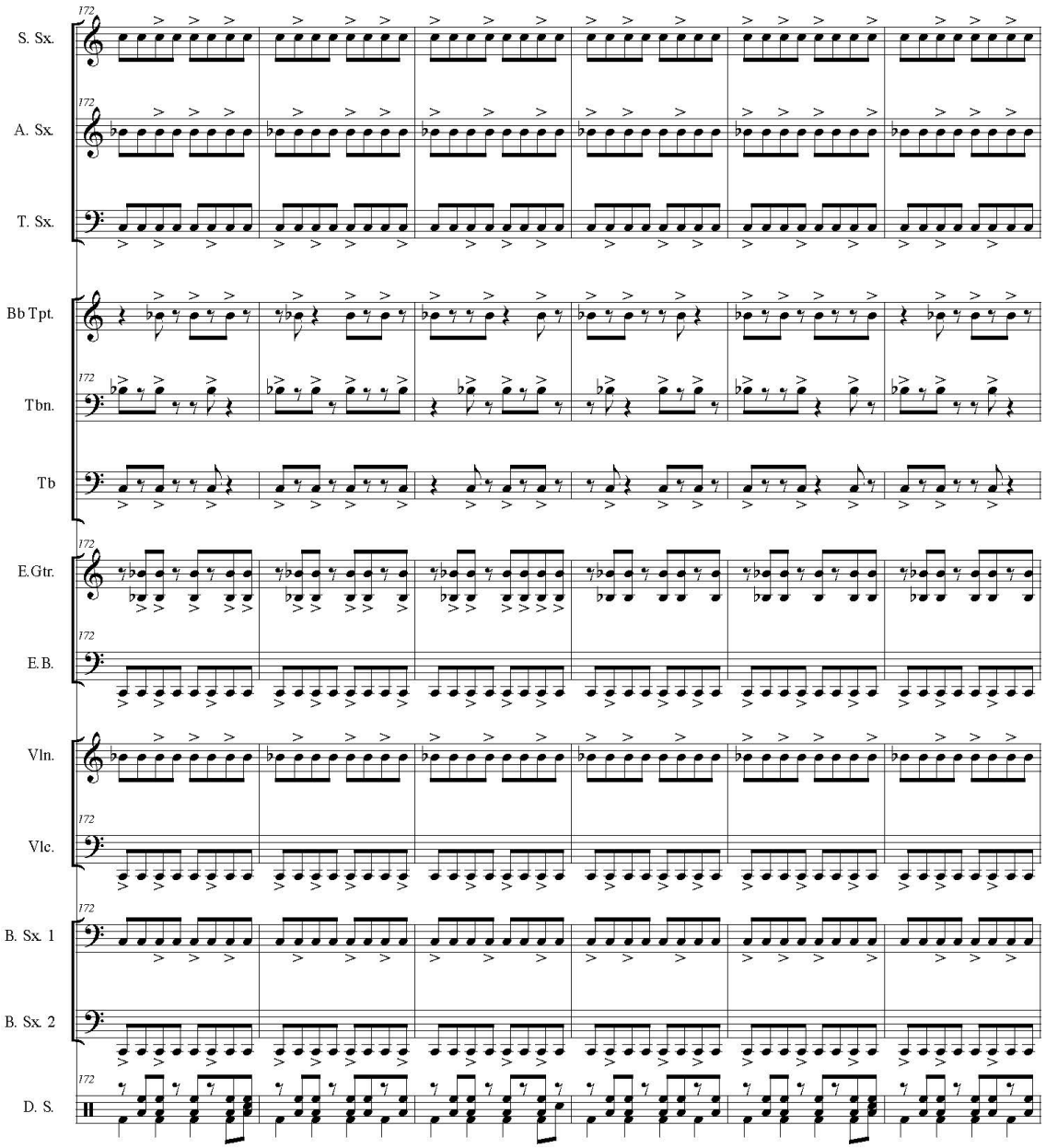
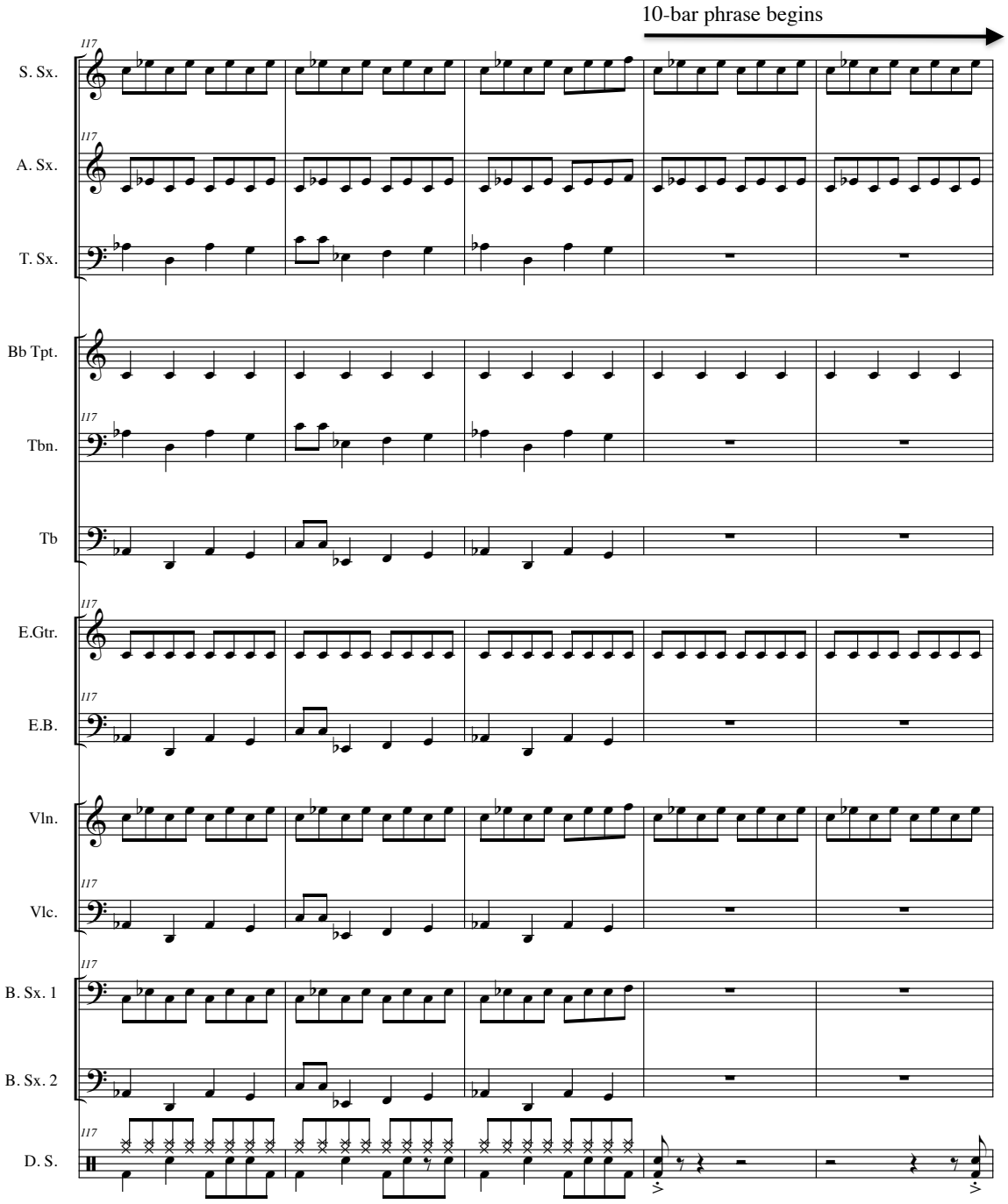


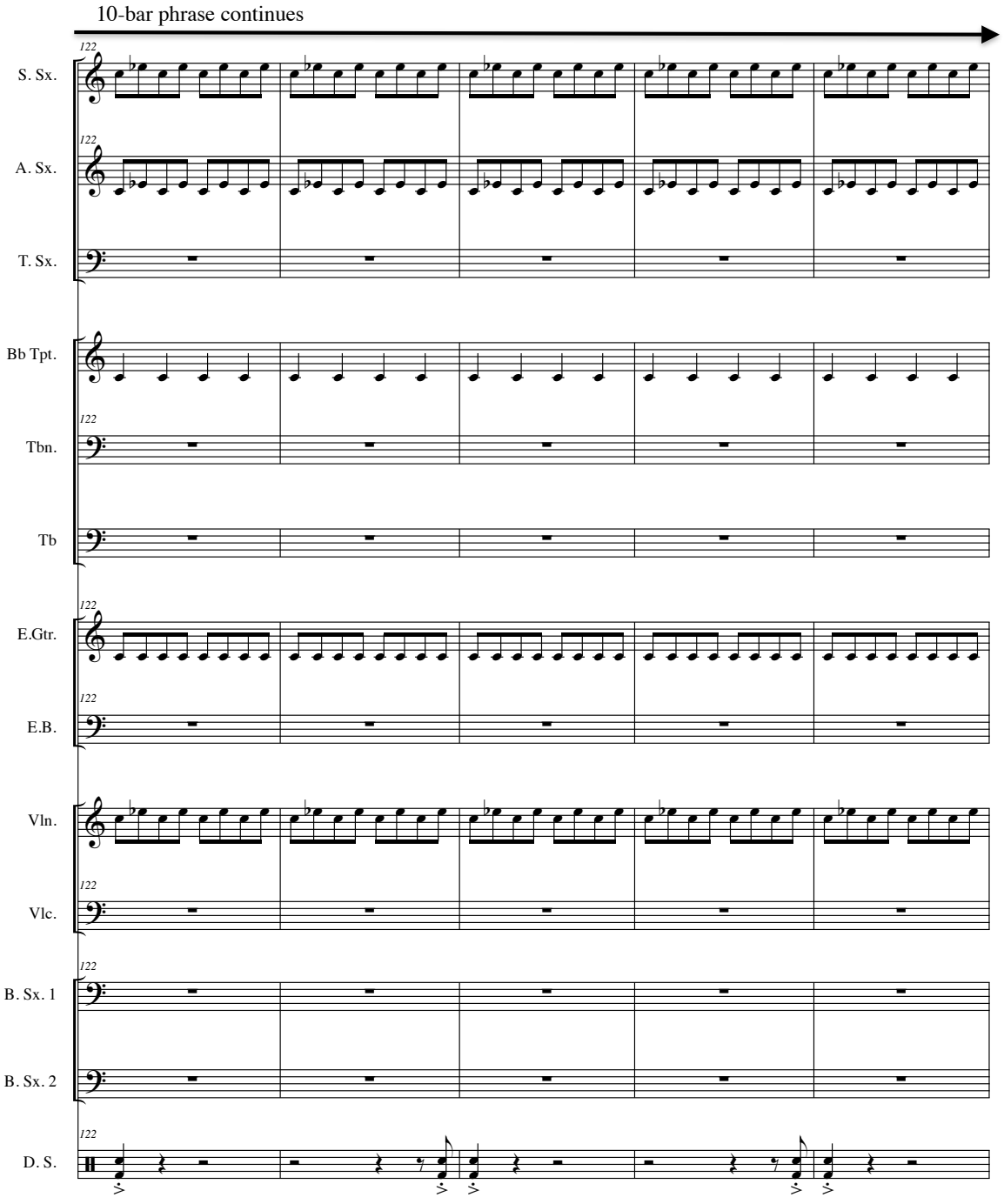
Figure 3: *Symphony X*, Part 1, mm. 166-177. Reprinted with the permission of the composer.

Part 2 continues in this style, as a strong and ominous bassline in C-minor, often diatonic and played by tenor saxophone, one baritone saxophone, trombone, tuba, cello, and electric bass, enters. The line sounds repetitive, yet often restarts unpredictably and consists of odd-numbered groupings of measures. A few minutes into the movement, a

fugal texture in a higher pitch range, still in constant eighth-notes, is introduced. Many of *Symphony X's* cycles are not what one would find in typical dance music. For example, a section starting at the four-minute mark (measure 120), with reduced, higher pitched instrumentation that builds tension into a full ensemble hit, lasts ten measures,[119] instead of a more characteristic eight- or sixteen-bar phrase. (See Figure 4.)[120] Listen to Excerpt 3 on the *Composers on the Decks* website (mm. 116-131).

[119] The ten-bar phrase lasts through measure 129 as indicated in Fig. 4.
[120] In addition, much of the movement has a 4/4 + 5/4 mixed meter.


10-bar phrase begins
S. Sx.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
Bb Tpt.
Tbn.
Tb
E.Gtr.
E.B.
Vln.
Vlc.
B. Sx. 1
B. Sx. 2
D. S.


10-bar phrase continues
S. Sx.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
Bb Tpt.
Tbn.
Tb
E.Gtr.
E.B.
Vln.
Vlc.
B. Sx. 1
B. Sx. 2
D. S.

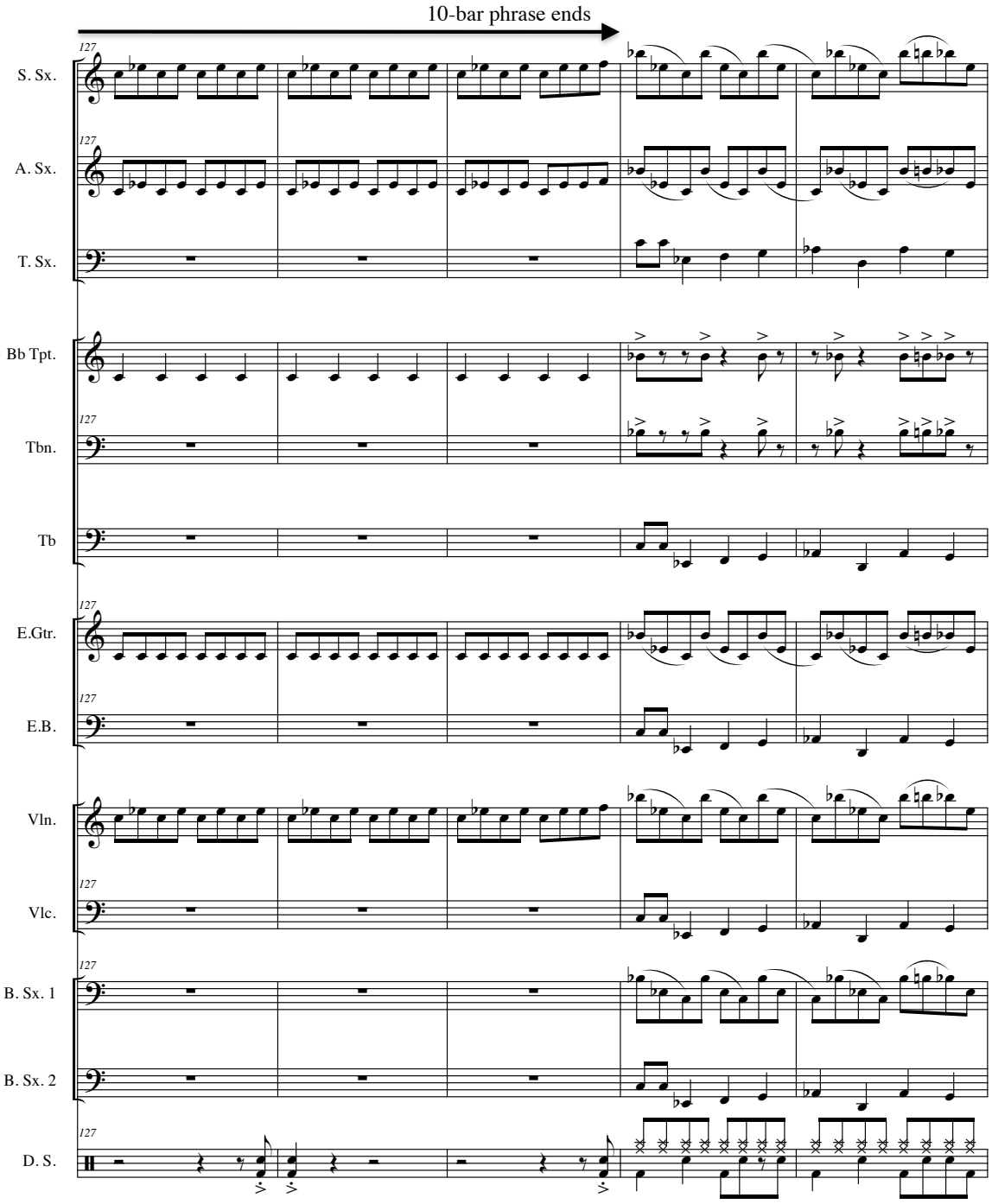


Figure 4: *Symphony X*, Part 2, mm. 117-131. Reprinted with the permission of the composer.

The latter two parts of *Symphony X* continue in the same style: driving eighth-notes, often with syncopated accent patterns; repetitious lines, usually either in unison,

staggered, or in fugal arrangements; frequent homophony and group rhythms; powerful, multi-instrument basslines; frequent quarter-note-based mixed meters; a constant pulse and lots of four-on-the-floor kick drum; and hardly any moments of silence. The first half of Part 4 is the only section that has little pulse; the whole ensemble plays very long, held notes, and the drums are tacit until the thirty-ninth measure. At about ten and a half minutes in (of over 17), running eighth-notes return.

Symphony X's wind parts are particularly demanding. The saxophones often play running eighth-notes for many minutes at a time with little or no break for breathing. But the piece is written for a club crowd, with repetitious figures and a constant beat; even when the drums are out, the pulse continues with eighth- and quarter-notes in usually accented figures. Mixed meter sections contain 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, or 5/4 but never eighth-note-based meters; the quarter-note pulse remains throughout, with the exception of Part 4's opening. The four movements are played together with no breaks in between. At 120 beats-per-minute, the tempo is slightly slower than average Berlin dance music; techno tends to hover around the 130 BPM mark. Still, the tempo is danceable. I was not in Berlin for any of the performances, but based on my extensive experience at EDM, instrumental-EDM, and club classical events, I expect that *Symphony X* resonated with clubbers in the city.

Potomak Records' website describes *Symphony X* as combining elements of hardcore, experimental and minimal music. Meyers says this was "just press release stuff," and explains more in depth:

> Experimental as a label is meaningless and my own background in minimal and hardcore music definitely have [*sic*] a big influence on my writing in general and

> S*ymphony X* in particular BUT it's the characterization of these influences being "combined" that I find just wrong. This idea of combining, i.e. take a bit of classical and add some rock accents etc., is a recipe for the worst kind of what usually gets labeled as "crossover."[121]

Like Prokofiev, Meyers dislikes the term "crossover." He seems to view his music as a true integration of rock (or EDM) and classical music, rather than, for example, "rock-influenced classical." Meyers has significant experience with minimalism and hardcore music, and he objects to these essential components of his style being extracted independently.

Later incarnations of Symphony X

In 2010, Meyers formed the Symphony X Trio with Loderbauer and video artist Lillevan. In performance, Meyers and Loderbauer manipulate the original studio recordings of the work while Lillevan creates live video. Meyers knows his way around some electronic music software such as Ableton Live but prefers to work acoustically, using electronic elements only when he needs them. Meyers refers to what he calls one of his "conservative bits," saying, "I love live musicians, I love working with people, I love collaborating. I'm not really an electronic musician at heart."[122] Perhaps the absence of live instruments is a reason the Symphony X Trio did not seem to take off.

In a later, 2012 performance, Meyers presented *Symphony X* with artist Tino Sehgal, who was originally trained as a choreographer. They scattered the performers, most of them seated on the floor, all around a large room in a "choreographed space" with no stage. Meyers conducted from a small chair. Between sections, musicians would

[121] Meyers, e-mail to the author (2013)
[122] Meyers, personal interview (2011)

move to a new spot, and sometimes they made movements while playing. Observers were free to stand, sit, lie down, or wander anywhere they wanted, often filling large spaces between the players. Springdance, the contemporary dance and performance festival in Utrecht, Netherlands that hosted this production, called Sehgal's direction "a spatial and temporal framework for the symphony."[123] In an interview with the festival, Meyers described the physically exhausting nature of the piece for its players, saying, "There is a real dynamic between the physicality of the musicians and that of the audience. For this reason I was not satisfied with performing it like a traditional concert; that format has existed for centuries."[124] Meyers and Seghal brought this physicality to the spectators by creating a setting in which they could be as close to the musicians as possible. "The spectator becomes a participant,"[125] says Meyers, perhaps answering Christopher Small's call for a return to participatory listening.

Zoé Cartier played cello in this performance. In our interview, she talked about the observers' new sound experience, being able to walk in and out of players instead of the standard "frontal," acoustic concerts, in which sound comes at the audience from one location. "It was a great experience to do it, to feel how it feels."[126]

Cartier (b. 1978) came to Berlin from France in 1998 to attend music school. After graduation, she took jobs with an orchestra and an opera company. "It was very boring for me; it had nothing to do with creativity, so I quit my job," she says. "I was very interested in working with a lot of artists, any kind of artists, and any kind of

[123] "Meyers and Sehgal." *Springdance*. n.p., n.d. Web. 8 Aug. 2013.
[124] Meyers (2012)
[125] Ibid.
[126] Cartier, personal interview (2013)

music."[127] Since then, Cartier has been involved in a variety of performances, such as dance productions and shows with Meyers and Brandt Brauer Frick. She is a member of a 12-piece string ensemble that puts on alternative presentations of classical music.

Meyers today

Over the last few years, Meyers has shifted his focus to art galleries. The Redux Orchestra has not performed since April of 2012, and an orchestral arrangement of *Symphony X* for the Brandenburg Symphony, slated for April 2013, was postponed. To him, the gallery was the logical place to go, as he finds clubs freer than concert halls, yet not without their own demands.

> The gallery or the museum is maybe the most free space, if you find a place for yourself there. It's very open, because...it doesn't have to be a concert. The audience doesn't have to be sitting there, the orchestra sitting there, and it doesn't have to be anything. It doesn't even have to be, in that sense, music. It could be anything you want it to be because now you're in the context of contemporary art, and as we know...the world of modern contemporary art is very, very broad.[128]

I went to an art opening of his at the Esther Schipper Gallery near Tiergarten, a park in central Berlin, in March 2013. The visitor walks into the long room that housed the installation, called *Songbook*, to see an upright piano in the middle and fourteen music stands lining the left wall. Behind the stands were a range of instruments in their cases, including accordion, acoustic guitar, bass guitar, cello, cornet, drums, electric guitar, glockenspiel, and recorder. Meyers had asked gallery staff if they played any instruments, or if they wanted to play one, and assembled a loose ensemble of mostly

[127] Ibid.
[128] Meyers, personal interview (2011)

amateurs and non-musicians, for whom Meyers would write compositions during the installation's four weeks. Visitors were able to observe rehearsals, workshops, and "quasi-private performances" that "may or may not be witnessed by an audience."[129] Visitors also had opportunities to participate in this compositional-performative process through one of the 16 compositions, "Visitors." Meyers sought "an expanded field of music where ideas, concepts, references, and a subjective approach are at least as important, if not more important than what we commonly understand as music: namely, the way a composition sounds and that sound's technical perfection."[130] Two of his latest gallery shows at the time of this writing were a year-long musical installation, *Chamber Music (Vestibule)*, at the Berlinische Gallerie, and a solo show at the Esther Schipper Gallery, consisting of three new works.

Meyers has also collaborated with other artists, made music for films and conducted opera in recent years. In 2008, he helped form an "avant-hardcore" band, Celan, in which he played keyboard. Also including Chris Spencer from the New York-based noise rock trio, Unsane, the group recorded one album, *Halo*, and is now on hiatus. In 2012, Meyers collaborated with Canadian producer-DJ Scott Monteith, who now lives in Berlin and performs under the name Deadbeat. Meyers played piano and Monteith operated electronics.

Meyers' philosophy

Meyers says something one does not hear often from a composer. "I am really not interested in finding my own 'musical language.' I am interested in finding new ways of

[129] Program Notes. *Songbook (ES13): Opening*. Esther Schipper Gallery, Berlin. 2013. Print.
[130] Ibid.

working."[131] What Meyers means is that his main focus in music is not the music itself, but the context in which he presents it. Meyers is an accomplished composer and conductor; this fact should not be overlooked. But his main goals with music, and his interdisciplinary collaborations, are artistic freedom and changing what it means to experience music.

Meyers sees an art museum as a multi-storied club that one can enter and exit at will. With a music performance, one must be there during the show or miss the music. In his art, and through gallery and museum installations, Meyers is trying to extend the experience of music, exploring what it means to exhibit music as both an aural and visual phenomenon in lieu of traditional concerts. He sees music as a time-based medium, like other performances and film, and he finds it strange "to see this fence around music – this thing separating music and composing from what would be considered contemporary art."[132]

Meyers views the visual artist as less beholden to an audience than composers; he says that while composers usually have to please the audience, artists are often commissioned by one person, and thus less dependent on audience reaction.[133] But Meyers is not interested in making combinations of sounds so new that they might alienate listeners; rather, it is the format he wants to break open, but often his way of innovating is by involving observers in the creative process. "I still have a kind of ideal that the listener is producing and listening at the same time,"[134] he says. As a musician and composer, Meyers says, one often has no say in the performance space or the

[131] Meyers (2012)
[132] Sala (2013)
[133] From a conversation Meyers had with the author on January 25, 2013 in Berlin.
[134] Sala (2013)

audience's arrangement in that space. “For me it’s really about wanting to be able to control more, to be free to extend the composition beyond the notes and into some other realm.”[135]

Meyers defines composing as “the act of organizing time,”[136] similar to John Cage's definition of music.[137] But Meyers draws more inspiration from Erik Satie than from Cage. In Meyers' first solo show at the Esther Schipper Gallery in Berlin, from September to October 2013, all three works were inspired by Satie. One room is a response to Satie's 1893 composition, *Vexations*, which was to be performed 840 times. Meyers composed *Vexations 2* for the occasion and displays it by means of 840 handwritten sheets of music, along with a detuned grand piano. A second room features another composition, *Serious Immobilities*, a title that comes from Satie's instructions to the performer of *Vexations*. On each Saturday that the show is running, the four female voices, electric guitar, and electric bass will perform the piece during gallery hours (11:00 AM to 6:00 PM). On other days, “the piece will remain as an installation of remnants of the performance, including props and instruments.”[138] Another part of the show is a series of banner advertisements in art magazines and on the internet, “recall[ing] Erik Satie’s eccentric habit of publishing absurd announcements in the Parisian press of the time.”[139]

In different ways, this solo show at the Esther Schipper Gallery attempts to extend music beyond its normal focus on a composition’s perfect sound. In the first room, the

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[135] Ibid.
[136] Meyers (2012)
[137] Cage defines music as “organization of sound” in Cage (1962).
[138] Ulrichs (2013)
[139] “Ari Benjamin Meyers: Black Thoughts.” *Esther Schipper*. Web. 9 Oct. 2013.

sheet music itself is displayed, and visitors may play a detuned piano if they so choose. The second room offers seven-hour performances, presumably quite repetitious, in the extended style of *Vexations*, but also, the "remnants of performance" suggest at the music when the players are not actualizing it. In presenting sheet music, a piano that visitors can play, a *Vexations*-esque piece for sextet performed for a seven-hour stretch each week, and "props and instruments" when the ensemble is not present, Meyers is highlighting numerous facets of the musical process that typical concerts do not, as well as trying to bring the visitor into the performance.

Meyers' trajectory from traditional concert spaces to dance clubs and now to art galleries is demonstrative of the composer's emphasis on innovation of music's place and practice. Like the concert hall, though to a lesser degree, Meyers found the club a space with limitations. At present, he is "exhibiting" music in the art world, as galleries and museums offer him the most artistic freedom and opportunity to widen the boundaries of music.

Francesco Tristano

Francesco Tristano Schlimé (b. 1981, Luxembourg) is a classical pianist, composer, and EDM artist. Perhaps the most paradoxical musician I have come across in my research, Tristano has released recordings of mainly Baroque and twentieth-century composers' piano works, such as Bach, Buxtehude, Frescobaldi, Stravinsky, Berio and Cage. But he has also released recordings of his trio, Aufgang (made up of two pianos and drums), and his original compositions, both acoustic piano works and electro-acoustic, often techno-influenced EDM tracks with piano. Many notable EDM producers

have remixed his works, and Tristano has collaborated with Detroit techno luminary Carl Craig, influential Berlin techno producer Moritz von Oswald, and the Mexican electronica artist, Murcof. Now based in Barcelona, Tristano leads a double life as concert pianist and club performer. While Tristano is not one of this study's primary research subjects, his work is very relevant and deserves mention.[140]

In an interview with Resident Advisor, Tristano talks about a recent album, *bachCage* (2011), in which he presents works by Bach alongside Cage's compositions and his own *Introit* and *Interludes,* and uses subtle electronic processing such as reverb and filtering to modify the works. Moritz von Oswald produced the album. Of the Bach *Partita No. 1*, Tristano notes that "each movement has a defined rhythmic structure which is linked to the dance movements of the time."[141] After years of improvising and working with dance music, he now "hears dance music" when listening to the *Partita*. Composing and listening to techno also guided Tristano toward minimalism. He became interested in modular music with all of its components "melt[ing] into one common element," and he considers Bach's work such music. Tristano has always composed and improvised, and he talks about how in earlier centuries, composers and interpreters were not often separate. Of *bachCage*, he says the classical establishment is changing quickly. "I don't think I could have done this with this label five years ago,"[142] referring to the unlikely pairing of Bach and Cage and to the electronic processing. He composed music

[140] There are two reasons why I decided not to devote a large portion of my research to Tristano. First, I chose to focus on composer-DJs who work with larger ensembles, as opposed to Tristano, who usually performs solo or with a small group. Second, I think his instrumental-EDM is not as musically effective as that of my primary research subjects. In my analysis of his performance, I will detail some reasons for this. Still, he is one of a small number of musicians who dedicate themselves to instrumental-EDM composition and performance.
[141] Tristano (2011). Presumably he refers here to Bach's *Partita No. 1 in B-flat major*, BWV 825, originally written for harpsichord. Tristano includes this work on his *bachCage* album.
[142] Ibid.

for his previous album, *Idiosynkrasia*, a collection of originals and reinterpreted techno classics recorded in Carl Craig's Detroit studio, "like a producer lays out his techno tracks."[143]

Tristano performed at the Berlin Atonal festival on a Tuesday night, July 30, 2013. The festival states its goals in typical, anti-commercial Berlin fashion: "…to resist the trends of the mainstream, to provide platforms for experimentation, to support those who want to break with trite and lazy habits of watching and listening."[144]

After two one-hour DJ sets from Anstam and Kassem Mosse and 17 minutes of set-up time, Tristano appeared onstage with another musician and began playing. It was quite dark and difficult to see, but Tristano appeared to have a laptop, at least one keyboard and perhaps some other MIDI devices. I could not determine what the other musician was doing; he was most likely controlling an onstage mixing board or in charge of the electronic percussion, or both. Like many live EDM sets, it was difficult to determine distinct boundaries between tracks, as Tristano often overlapped one track with the next. Not being very familiar with his music made it more difficult to know when Tristano was bringing in a new track or when he was simply improvising. The 70-minute set consisted of approximately seven distinct tracks, ranging from about five to ten minutes each, and considerable transition time, stripped-down interludes and keyboard improvisation.

The set started off in a compelling way, with Tristano monitoring effects knobs and laptop, triggering precomposed synth loops and refraining from playing the

[143] Ibid.
[144] "Berlin Atonal 2013: Forming Space at Kraftwerk Berlin." *Resident Advisor.* Resident Advisor, Ltd., 17 June 2013. Web. 6 August 2013.

keyboard. The first four minutes were ambient, without beats. A subtle beat entered, and three minutes later, a strong high hat sound came in on the offbeats. The next minute, a loud kick drum sample became part of the mix. For the first twelve minutes, Tristano appeared to lay off the keyboard; this gave him the ability to closely monitor effects and provide constant variation. These first minutes had detailed panning effects as well, a technique that impressed me but receded as the set went on. Something I know personally, having performed as a solo DJ and saxophonist, is that when one's hands are tied playing an instrument, it is difficult to provide the minute variations much dance music offers its listeners.

At the 12-minute mark, Tristano brought in what sounded like a new track and began playing live keyboard for the first time. The sound was a bit goofy – out of place – as its vibrato was reminiscent of a theramin. Tristano appeared to be improvising. It is not easy to improvise on an instrument over a static, techno backdrop without chord progressions to move the music forward. Many of Tristano's improvisations were directionless, and there was not enough happening otherwise in the music to maintain my interest or inspire me to dance enthusiastically. Often during the set, vague melodic themes seemed to fade away without development.

About 35 minutes in, Tristano started playing the keyboard with an acoustic piano sound, and the crowd reacted, most likely familiar with the song he had begun. The contrast of the acoustic piano and the hard beats was quite interesting and refreshing for the ears. After midnight, almost 50 minutes into the set, Tristano brought in his version of Derrick May's techno classic, “Strings of Life.” Tristano played what was originally an acoustic piano sample live. The Berlin crowd, more familiar with Detroit techno than

most Americans, responded well.

Tristano's role often shifted between two poles, playing a precomposed song or track and improvising on keyboard. The beats themselves also tended to alternate widely, either nonexistent or quite restrained, or very hard techno-style beats. Sometimes these powerful beats would enter out of the blue, with little or no preparation. Nonetheless, the festival dance crowd seemed quite engaged throughout the set and cheered enthusiastically at its end.

This practice of the DJ-instrumentalist is not widespread and will continue to develop. Tristano is obviously a very talented pianist with diverse musical interests, and he has collaborated with some major figures in techno music, but it appears his live act is still evolving. He can, and most likely will, make his sets more musically compelling by adding in more preplanned melodic and harmonic material, smoothing his transitions and taking advantage of more climactic moments, as Brandt Brauer Frick have demonstrated is possible.

From Club to Hybrid Concert: The Brandt Brauer Frick Ensemble

"It has been a very new experience to play to a seated audience! But I have to say I love it too! Everybody is very focused while listening and you are not forced to make anyone move his hips. Instead, people give you their full positive listening attention and this creates a very special energy when you play."[145]

-Henrik Schwarz, Berlin-based composer-DJ

In Brandt Brauer Frick's music video to "Bop," a track from their debut album, *You Make Me Real* (2010), the track begins with Daniel Brandt playing a repeated pattern on a tight snare drum with a yarn mallet. Next, Paul Frick enters with another repeated

[145] Schwarz (2012)

pattern on a tiny xylophone. A clone of Brandt enters next, hitting his drum sticks together in quarter-notes. We see Jan Brauer playing a Moog Little Phatty synthesizer (which had already entered the track slightly earlier). The staggered entrances continue with more and more clones of the three men, covering numerous percussion instruments, a vocal "bop," rainstick, upright piano and grand piano. The trio, dressed in dull-toned shirts and ties, looks like young lawyers, as the name might imply, not techno musicians. But their dress, and their name, fit the music in a way; it is highly structured, rhythmically precise and metronomic, and the video gives us a clear look into their compositional process and repetitive architecture. Despite being made up of mostly acoustic sound, the mix has the rigid feel of quantized electronic dance music.

Is it orchestrated techno? Is it mechanical instrumental composition? The group's first two album titles, *You Make Me Real* (2010), *Mr. Machine* (2011), and songs like "Pretend" and "Heart of Stone," reveal a struggle with identity, or perhaps an open question about authenticity and the cyborgian nature of electronic and electro-acoustic music. In fact, they view their meticulously mixed albums as "perfect illusion – too good to be true."[146] As one of the only groups to play live, techno-style dance music with a large ensemble of classical instruments, it is no wonder that they defy distinct genre labels, and they are happy to do so. "Some reviewers perceive us as minimal techno, some as modern classical, some as nu jazz and so on," says Brauer. "But we don't divide the world into techno and non-techno."[147] Brandt Brauer Frick takes the same approach with performance venue – they play concert and club gigs alike, and want to keep it that way – and with their music's function, saying they do not want to decide whether the

[146] Brandt Brauer Frick, quoted in Walters (2011)
[147] Jan Brauer, quoted in: "Brandt Brauer Frick." Fake Music Media, n.p. Web. 17 April 2013.

music is for listening or dancing.

Talking with Paul Frick

I interviewed Paul Frick (b. 1979, Berlin) in Brandt Brauer Frick's studio in the Neukölln neighborhood of Berlin. We drank espresso, he smoked, and we talked about music and listened to some as well. Frick grew up with "music from past centuries"[148] and music of the 1960s and 70s from his parents' collection. When he was 13, he checked out the now famous Love Parade in Berlin, but techno did not move him at the time. Instead, he started a band with a cousin and a friend the following year, playing guitar and experimenting by playing drums and trying out hip hop. At 18, he used a friend's computer to make some music and was at first disillusioned. But two years later, he bought his first computer so he could sample his favorite hip hop records and create beats. Later, he played keyboard for several hip hop live bands. He has played in at least 20 bands over the years.

Frick studied classical composition at the University of Arts in Berlin from 2000-2008, earning his Diplom, a degree similar to a U.S. Bachelor's plus Master's degree, in 2006. He went on to get his Meisterschuler in 2008. At a music workshop in Berlin, Frick talked about his experience studying composition at school and how he gravitated towards dance music:

> I was surrounded by these interesting composer guys who did very experimental things, and everything had to be very complex, and in me it created like the contrary. I just needed to do something much more simple. And only then when I was already studying composition I got aware that actually a simple element of music like a techno bass

[148] Frick, personal interview (2013)

> drum...gives you actually more freedom. I think I got aware of simplicity in a good way, only really late, and just basically because I was so pissed off by all the complexity.[149]

Something interesting that Frick discovered by playing keyboard in hip hop groups was that he actually liked the repetitive figures. "I found it always more exciting, the more repetitive it got."[150] In bands, he also experimented with house, drum and bass, and other typically EDM genres. In 2005 or 2006, Frick began focusing on producing electronic music and released his first EP in 2007, a record of four house tracks called *Do Something EP* on the Kalk Pets label. But Frick viewed his first tracks as too generic, and got together with percussionist Matthias Engler – the musician with whom he's worked the most in the last ten years – to record his second album, *Knock on Wood EP*, the following year. The title track, Side A of the record, features Engler on marimba over bouncy dance beats.

At about that time, in 2008, Frick connected with Daniel Brandt and Jan Brauer through Myspace because of shared music interests. Brandt and Brauer were classmates together in the southwestern German town of Wiesbaden, near Frankfurt, where they had their first studio. The two originally played "the best of rock and pop history"[151] together in a school band and went on to make their own music. They got together and quickly composed their first two tracks as Brandt Brauer Frick. After their debut album as a trio, they expanded into the ensemble.

The idea for the larger group was there early on. From the beginning, they wanted to perform musical components live, instead of triggering loops on a laptop. In order to

[149] CDR. "CDR Berlin x RBMA Workshop Brandt Brauer Frick." (2012)
[150] Frick, personal interview (2013)
[151] CDR. "CDR Berlin x RBMA Workshop Brandt Brauer Frick." (2012)

get club gigs quickly, they programmed samples from their studio tracks, which often utilized piano, vibraphone, and percussion, into a set-up consisting of groove box, keyboard, and drum pads. But for their next album, they signed on to !K7 records, which loaned them money to hold a rehearsal with a large ensemble. The largely acoustic format worked, and they recorded versions of their existing songs for *Mr. Machine*.

In terms of the instrumentation, Brandt Brauer Frick already knew various musicians in Berlin, like percussionists Matthias Engler and Ketan Bhatti and harpist Gunnhildur Einarsdottir. For the brass section, they settled on trombone and tuba because they could play deep "frequencies that are really pleasant when you hear techno."[152] They liked strings but saw the flute as "too folkloristic" and worried about the clarinet and saxophone evoking jazz. They also thought the double bass could make the group sound like a big band.

Brandt Brauer Frick listened through their existing tracks, jotting down arrangement ideas while trying not to adhere too closely to the originals. Then, Frick created the written orchestrations. In rehearsals, and sometimes one-on-one, the instrumentalists would show the composers different extended techniques that often made their way into the final version.

Frick says larger ensembles are gaining popularity in both the pop and electronic scenes. Of combining technology and acoustic instruments, he points to a society steeped in history with a relatively quick jump forward into music technology. "I think it's in the air that people want to check out, ok, how [do] our tradition and all this technology go

[152] Frick, personal interview (2013)

together, what aesthetic can lead to something."[153] Still, he does not see the instrumental-EDM phenomenon becoming too widespread, as employing and touring with large ensembles is economically and logistically difficult.

The Brandt Brauer Frick Ensemble: December 23, 2012, Berlin

I saw the Brandt Brauer Frick Ensemble at the Volksbühne ("People's Theater") in the north part of Berlin's Mitte neighborhood. The Volksbühne is an old theater built in the early 20th century and rebuilt in the 1950s after significant World War II damage. Today it offers mostly experimental theater. At 7:00 PM, an hour before the show, the Parkettcafé was open for drinks and DJ Marc Weiser played. I arrived at 8:00 and missed the DJ, however. At 20 euros, the ticket was pricier than a club night, and the show much shorter.

The Grosses Haus, the main hall where the performance took place, had sloped seating with a nice view of the stage, a balcony section, and a large dome in the middle of the ceiling. The theater was packed with people mostly in their 20s and 30s, but with plenty of older concert-goers as well. Many were dressed nicely, but not formally. Some brought their drinks into the theater, but otherwise, it had the feel of a formal concert. The stage was large enough for Brandt Brauer Frick's expansive setup of 11 musicians. The ensemble consisted of violin (and rain stick), cello, harp, trombone, tuba, grand piano (usually Frick), Moog Little Phatty synthesizer (Brauer), Erika Janunger on vocals (for two tracks), and an array of percussion instruments played by three percussionists who often rotated to different stations including these instruments: drum set (often

[153] Ibid.

Brandt), vibraphone, marimba, gong, triangle, crotales, wood sound, floor tom, timpani, a wooden hand drum, wood blocks, additional miscellaneous instruments. All wore headsets with click tracks, and all except the singer had music stands with sheet music for the whole show.

The set featured ten distinct tracks, often connected with beat-free music. After the sixth track, when the vocalist sang for the first time, Brandt Brauer Frick played EDM in their original trio formation, followed by two more ensemble tracks and two encores. Most ensemble tracks came from the ensemble album, *Mr. Machine*, which itself primarily consists of orchestrated versions of tracks from their debut album, *You Make Me Real*. As the listeners sat in their seats, some bobbed their heads subtly to the pulse-based music. When the stage hands brought out Brandt Brauer Frick's massive array of electronics hardware on a large table and the trio played a mini-set of their more typical EDM, some left their seats to dance where the outside aisles met the stage. The trio played two tracks from their new *Miami* album and one remix of a track by Mathias Schaffhaeuser and Alex Smoke that led into a track from their first release. Frick said in our interview that the show was messy, and on three songs, the percussion section heard no click track.[154] The ensemble pieces were groovy and largely pulse-based, and while I wished I were standing and dancing, they did not feel completely out of place in a sit-down setting; but the EDM set felt awkward, simply in the wrong surroundings. Throughout the concert, the lights were quite active, as were the smoke machines.

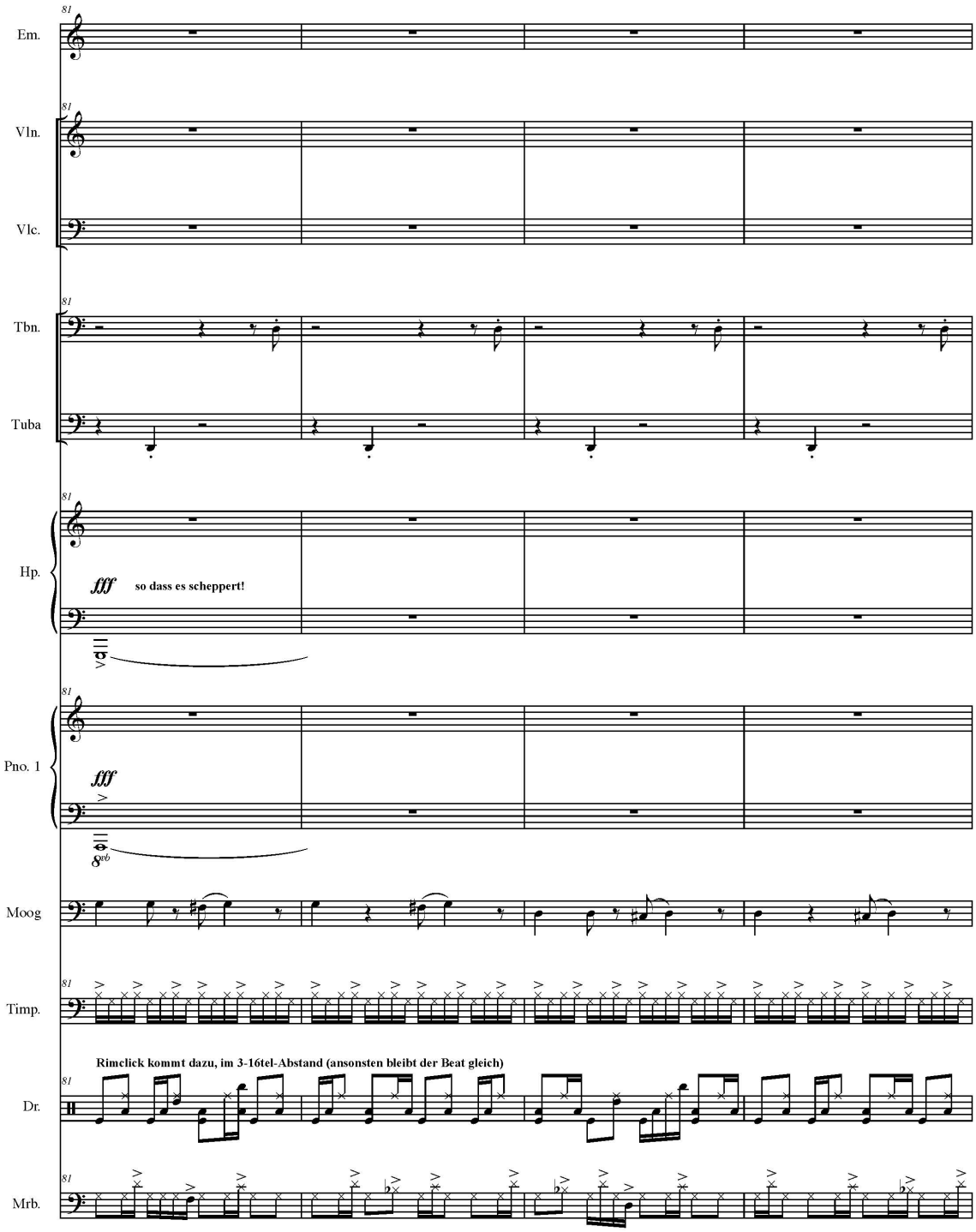
Overall, I found the music interesting – especially the wide range of extended techniques and staccato figures that create an unmistakable Brandt Brauer Frick sound –

[154] Frick, personal interview (2013)

but because of the beats and repetition, it would fit well in the club. While many reviews reference Steve Reich as an influence, the repetition used in Brandt Brauer Frick's music is not usually the hypnotic phase patterns that characterize much of Reich's work, which better suits seated listening because of its near trance-inducing qualities. Brandt Brauer Frick's repetition is more bouncy, often with a four-on-the-floor kick drum; essentially, it is dance music and demands a dance floor environment to be fully appreciated. Brandt Brauer Frick's tunes truly are music for the mind and the body, and to take one mode of experience away is to diminish their effect.

Brandt Brauer Frick's characteristic web of percussive sounds from "Pretend," written by Ema Jolly, or Emika, and arranged by Brandt Brauer Frick, can be seen in Figure 5.[155] Listen to Excerpt 4 on the *Composers on the Decks* website (mm. 80-89). The trombone and tuba play "mit Hand auf Mundstück schlagen" (they hit their mouthpieces with open palms); the Moog Little Phatty sounds a deep, staccato and sometimes bent bassline; the timpani is also played with the wooden part of the mallet; the drum set holds a steady, subtle kick and hi hat dance beat, along with a "one shot shaker" and a clap sample triggered by an electronic drum pad, and prominent rim shots every three sixteenth-notes add a strong cross-rhythm; and the marimba plays "mit Holzseite der Schlegel," or with the wooden side of the mallet. In addition, on the black notes, the marimba player hits Daniel Brandt's "Kinder-Xylophon" (children's xylophone). A little later in the track, *sul ponticello* violin and cello build up to one of the highest energy sections, involving *tremelo* strings and a running piano part (see Figure 6). Listen to Excerpt 5 on the *Composers on the Decks* website (mm. 128-136).

[155] Brandt Brauer Frick produced a "rework" of Emika's track for her single LP release in 2011, and followed this up with an exciting ensemble version on their full-length *Mr. Machine* album.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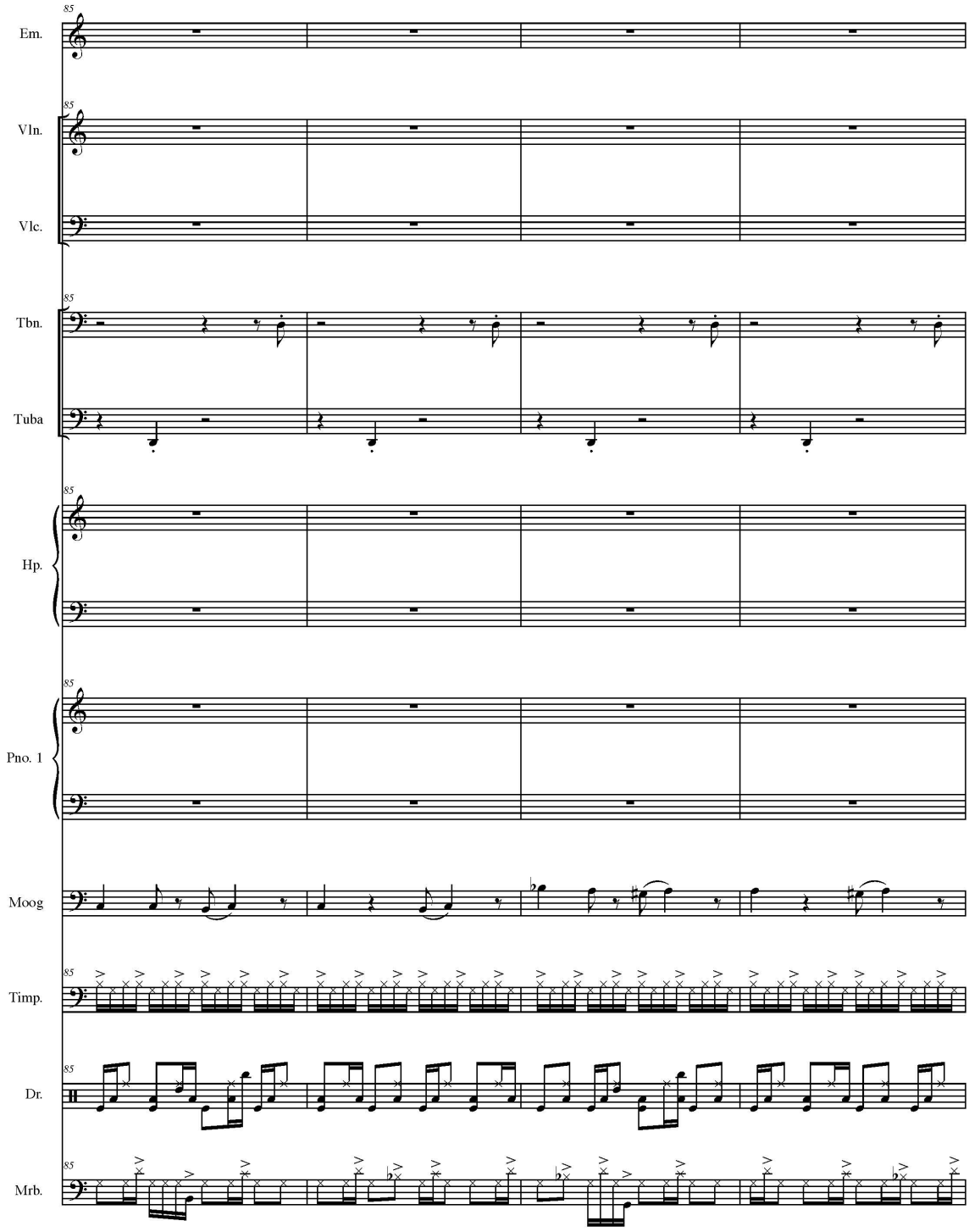

Figure 5: "Pretend," mm. 81-89. Reprinted with the permission of Paul Frick.

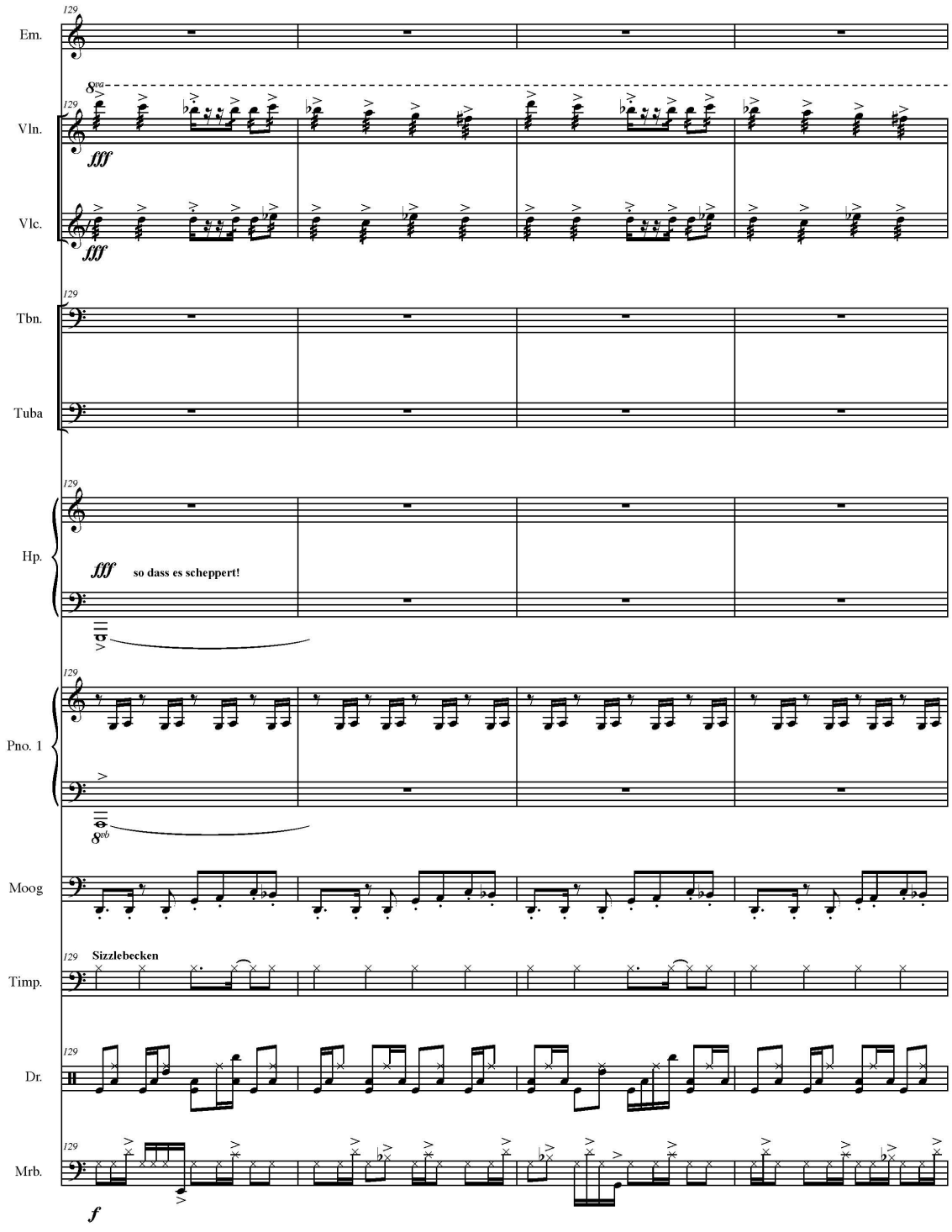

Figure 6: "Pretend," mm. 129-132. Reprinted with the permission of Paul Frick.

When asked about performing club versus concert shows, Frick says there are

advantages to both. The group has had "some of the most amazing experience[s]" with club formats and the highest adrenaline, but "for the music to go into detail and for the fun of making music,"[156] seated concerts have proved slightly better. On the concert stage, the ensemble has time for a proper sound check, to adjust the approximately 20 microphones and prevent feedback. Still, Frick seems to favor a dance setting because of the community aspect of the overall experience:

> A piece can be almost like a social situation. That's the cool thing about club music, that often club music only becomes the full experience with the people, and only then you see kind of its architecture. You experience it, and you don't get annoyed with the repetitions or so on.[157]

Daniel Brandt says in a video interview:

> Most important for a successful or a great night is always the crowd. You can always have a special feeling if there is the right crowd, and if they are there for the right music, and if they get into that music. That is the key thing. The sound system is not even that important.[158]

While Brandt Brauer Frick enjoy their club gigs and crowd energy, Frick recognizes that some music needs the right setting:

> There's music that works in many contexts, but that's not a proof of quality. There's music that's really vulnerable against being destroyed by a context, but may still be something really special in a certain context.[159]

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Brandt Brauer Frick has spanned the club-classical and instrumental-EDM scenes in Berlin; the trio has performed back-to-back DJ sets for a Yellow Lounge event,

[156] Frick, personal interview (2013)
[157] Ibid.
[158] CDR. "A Private Chat With Brandt Brauer Frick at CDR Berlin." (2012)
[159] Frick, personal interview (2013)

remixed a Francesco Tristano solo piano piece for a Deutsche Grammophon LP, and hired multiple instrumentalists who have played with others featured in this research project: Zoe Cartier, who has played cello in Meyers' Redux Orchestra, and Matthias Engler, who has played with Meyers and at the 2012 Nonclassical club night at Chalet in Berlin. Felix Mesenburg describes Berlin as "a village"[160] where one can meet others quite easily within a very open-minded musical culture.

Others in the mix

The practice of instrumental-EDM is by no means limited to Meyers, Brandt Brauer Frick, and Tristano. Henrik Schwarz, a well-known house producer and DJ in Berlin, has frequently collaborated with live instrumentalists. Known best for playing DJ gigs at major clubs like Berghain and Watergate, Schwarz has an ongoing collaboration with Norwegian jazz pianist Bugge Wesseltoft; the DJ operates electronics while Wesseltoft plays grand piano. The duo has performed to sit-down audiences and is signed to Universal Music. Schwarz's *Instruments* is a set of ten of his most popular dance originals and remixes orchestrated for live chamber orchestra; he worked with bassist Jo Brecht on the arrangements. The pieces have been performed in major concert halls in Europe. Schwarz put together a band for the Watergate club's tenth anniversary party in August 2012, featuring live drums, electric guitar, electric bass, keyboards and Schwarz on electronics and vocals. This year, he completed an electronic commission by the Staatsballet Berlin, which premiered in the Berghain club in May 2013.

With his *Instruments* project, Schwarz wanted to see if he could "transfer the

[160] Mesenburg, personal interview (2013)

aesthetics and energies of techno and electronic dance music into a concert hall."[161] Schwarz explains what he sees as three phenomena that have made such a collaboration possible: first, a new open-mindedness from within the classical scene. He perceives that classical institutions are opening themselves up to new styles and different kinds of artists because of the lack of young people at their events:

> Concert halls seem to have difficulties to attract new and younger audiences to fill these large venues. Not everybody wants to hear just music that is 100 or more years old. A lot of classical music that is younger than that is not easy to access for a new audience. It can be very complicated or encrypted and some people say it is elitist.[162]

Second, EDM has been developing for over 25 years. People listen to it outside the club. Now that electronic dance musicians have a wide audience, they are ready for "the next step," ready to innovate. And third, computers have become so fast and flexible that they can be fully integrated instruments. "We are no longer slaves to technology."[163]

When Schwarz heard the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra read through his track, "Walk Music," for the first time, "it was one of the most amazing moments of [his] career so far."[164] As a club veteran and concert hall neophyte, Schwarz's comments on his experience playing to a seated audience are interesting, as they contrast with those of classical musicians entering the EDM world. "Everybody is very focused while listening and you are not forced to make anyone move his hips. Instead, people give you their full positive listening attention and this creates a very special energy when you play."[165]

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[161] Schwarz (2012)
[162] Ibid.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid.

While the classical composer finds freedom in the club setting, this DJ appreciates *not* having to make people dance and values the rapt mode of listening. In much the same way, Brandt Brauer Frick take to the concert hall, with its listeners' focused attention.

Emika, or Ema Jolly, originally from England and of Czech descent, now lives in Berlin.[166] She studied classical piano and composition, then earned a music technology degree. She has worked for the EDM record label, Ninja Tune, and for the music technology company, Native Instruments, as a sound designer. Ninja Tune and Osgut Tun, the Berghain club's record label, have released her original music, which is primarily dark dance music and often includes her own singing. She sings and plays keyboard in her live sets.

Another notable woman who works in both the EDM and classical worlds is Mira Calix. For much of her career, Calix DJed and made strictly electronic music, signed to Britain's experimental electronic label, Warp Records. In more recent years, she has incorporated live instruments into her compositions, writing commissions for ensembles such as the London Sinfonietta and Bang on a Can.

British composer-DJ Bonobo (Simon Green) creates down-tempo tracks out of an array of acoustic samples of instruments and found sounds, and often tours with a live band, performing renditions of his studio productions. Green records guitars, bass, keyboard, and percussion himself for his albums and recruits others to play the instruments he does not. He records for Ninja Tune, the same label that signed Emika.

Other examples of instrumental-EDM are often one-time projects rather than long-term ensembles. Pantha du Prince is a German EDM producer named Hendrik

[166] See above for a description of Jolly's collaboration with Brandt Brauer Frick.

Weber who has appealed to clubbers as well as the "indie" scene, with Pitchfork rating his 2010 album, *Black Noise*, an 8.3 out of 10. In his first two albums, he used a wide array of metallic percussion samples. This year, he recruited a five-piece percussion ensemble called The Bell Laboratory to recreate some of his tracks live and wrote a few new compositions for himself and the group. Pantha du Prince performed on electronics along with the ensemble's assortment of mallet instruments, gongs, carillon and miscellaneous percussion at 8:00 PM on January 30, 2013 at the Hubbel am Ufer 1 theater in Berlin. I mistakenly purchased a seated balcony ticket, as the area below was free of seats and turned into a full dance floor by concert time. The show had no opener and started in the early evening, a concert time as opposed to a typical club time. It was part of the CTM festival that took place for a week. The show was exciting, and I wished I could be on the floor, dancing. Pantha du Prince's orchestrated tracks from previous albums were more compelling than his newer compositions for the group.

Apparat, a well known Berlin-based producer and DJ, has released a number of melodic techno albums and collaborated with Berliner DJ-producers Ellen Allien and Modselektor. In 2007, he formed a small band to tour with his album, *Walls*, and more recently created the Apparat Band, which includes guitar, drums, keyboards, electronics, and sometimes stringed instruments. Apparat, whose real name is Sascha Ring, plays guitar and sings. This project is less dance floor-oriented than most of his previous work yet still uses electronic elements and retains EDM references. Apparat has since composed an electro-acoustic score to a theatrical version of Tolstoy's *Krieg und Frieden* (*War and Peace*), which he and an ensemble performed live along with the play. He subsequently recorded an album of this music for theater, which is not EDM, and toured

with it.

Part 3: A narrow demographic

Soosan Lolavar's 2011 ethnography of the Nonclassical community analyzes musical, technological, social and commercial aspects of the label, depicting an interesting tension between modernist and postmodern conceptions of creativity and a traditional, male-dominated system of gender roles.[167] Lolavar spoke with 11 remixers and found the group to be rather homogenous: generally highly educated, "overwhelmingly white," and nearly all male. Of the two albums she focused on, *Cortical Songs* (2009) and *Songspin* (2011), only one remixer out of 18 was a woman. Paraphrasing Barbara Bradby,[168] she states the connection between technological expertise and masculinity in electronic composition. Many of the performers on the albums are women – about two-thirds of Nonclassical releases feature all-female or mostly-female ensembles or a female soloist – but this aligns with Lolavar's characterization of women's role in popular music as primarily performers: "To perform is to put a body on display in a role which is typically associated with women."[169] Within the structure of Nonclassical, performers and composers are actually given more artistic control than the remixers, so the gendered power structure is less clear. Still, in terms of male remixers manipulating often female performers, "the masculine domination of

[167] Lolavar (2011)
[168] See: Bradby, Barbara. "Sampling Sexuality: Gender, Technology and the Body in Dance Music." *Popular Music* 12.2 (1993): 155-176.
[169] Here she cites: Middleton, Richard, "Last Night a DJ Saved My Life: Avians, Cyborgs and Siren Bodies in the Era of Phonographic Technology." *Radical Musicology* 1 (2006): n. pag. Web.

feminine creativity"[170] exists.

The same general trends apply to Mason Bates' Mercury Soul event, Ari Benjamin Meyers' Redux Orchestra and the Brandt Brauer Frick Ensemble. For this study, I attempted to include female composer-DJs, but I was unable to find any that applied to this narrow musical practice that I have investigated. Surely the low percentage of women and people of color involved in instrumental-electronic dance music comes from the histories of the two genres that have come together: classical, dominated by white men since its inception, and electronic dance, originally and still male-dominated.[171,172] Most likely, the merging of these two worlds, both traditionally hostile towards female agency, only lowers the likelihood of women entering this practice. These gender and racial dynamics demonstrate that highly innovative music and performance practice can still conform in certain ways to elements of a longstanding status quo.

With Mercury Soul, the typical gender and racial demographics of the classical music world are at work, with white men in the positions of authority and technological mastery (Bates as composer and DJ, other men as DJs and conductor Benjamin Shwartz) and a mostly white, majority female group of instrumentalists. However, Ann Patterson, though behind the scenes, was director of the production and oversaw the live lighting design.

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[170] Lolavar (2011)

[171] Women are now becoming more active in the world of popular electronic music. For more on this, see Rebekah Farrugia's *Beyond the Dance Floor: Female DJs, Technology, and Electronic Dance Music Culture* and Magdalena Olszanowski's "What to Ask Women Composers: Feminist Fieldwork in Electronic Dance Music" from *Dancecult* 4.2 (2012).

[172] While people of color have been largely responsible for the invention of most EDM forms, classical music has been dominated by whites, and classical's racial demographics have generally applied to the practices at hand.

The Yellow Lounge event on May 7, 2013, in Berlin, however, challenged traditional gender roles, featuring three male instrumentalists, two DJs – one of whom, Eva Be, is a woman – and one VJ, ma.beat, also female.

Familiar gender dynamics accompany Meyers' Redux Orchestra, with women playing some saxophones and strings. According to Meyers' website, no women composers or electronic musicians were featured in the Redux Orchestra collaborations, though at least one female DJ participated. Chica Paula played DJ sets at Club Redux 1, which featured the music of Terry Riley, Club Redux 3, which revolved around Philip Glass' music, and Club Redux 8, featuring The Orb.[173]

The demographics of the Brandt Brauer Frick Ensemble are much the same. Women sometimes perform on stringed instruments or sing, and the men cover electronics, composition, percussion, and brass instruments. A notable exception for the group is Brandt Brauer Frick's cover of Emika's "Pretend." The trio has also reworked Danish singer/songwriter Agnes Obel's "On Powdered Ground" with both electronic and ensemble versions. In dealing with the music of female composers, they are in some ways subscribing to Soosan Lolavar's description of "the musical performances of women [being] creatively and technologically manipulated by men."[174] However, unlike some Nonclassical remixers on the Juice Vocal Ensemble's *Songspin* release, Brandt Brauer Frick refrain from chopping up or significantly distorting the women's voices and

[173] It must be noted that Meyers' website does not include complete information for every Redux Orchestra engagement.

[174] Lolavar (2011). Lolivar notes that on *Songspin*, a Nonclassical album from the Juice Vocal Ensemble, a group of three women, nearly all the remixers are men. By distorting the female voices in the remix process, these male remixers "had the effect of rendering female expression unintelligible by reconstituting the performances of Juice Vocal Ensemble in way that restricted their ability to make linguistic sense through their performance...producing non-verbal vocal sounds is an important stereotypical role for women in opera which is tied to associations of the female voice in music as bodily and irrational."

lyrics. In their version of “On Powdered Ground,” Brandt Brauer Frick sample the chorus, “Don't break your back on the track,” leaving it intact. Similarly, Brandt Brauer Frick keep Emika's lyrics true to the original in their “Pretend” rework, allowing for Emika or another singer to perform them live.

On Facebook on August 9, 2013, Emika posted an article from *Beutiful Magazine* called “Women Shout Out Sexism in the Music Industry.”[175] Along with the link, she added that she hasn't yet felt objectified based on her physical image.

> But I have experienced repeatedly during my times in higher education, and music industry jobs, the disbelief that I am able to do 'technical' work and be a producer or boss or engineer. I have on more then [*sic*] one occasion been told I should go and be a singer...that I am on the wrong side of the studio. If everyone around doubts your abilities, for years, and patronizes you, and doesn't give you the chance to do the 'technical work' or the 'serious business stuff' then it might get inside your skin....and you might start to believe this yourself. Education or rather, mis education is in my experience, always the issue. If the job is not being given to you, then you fight for it, or make it yourself. Women are producers. Everywhere, in many different industries. I know enough of them to know it's true.[176]

[175] Patricia. “Women Shout Out Sexism in the Music Industry.” *Beutiful Magazine*. Beutiful Magazine LLC, 8 Aug. 2013. Web.
[176] Emika. Facebook. 9 August 2013. Web.

Part 4: Conclusions

Live Instrumental-Electronic Dance Music: some difficulties

In all of my research, the Brandt Brauer Frick Ensemble and the Redux Orchestra are the only ensembles I have found to play hybrid dance music within the late-night club format. These shows are quite difficult to put on, both musically and logistically, a major reason they are extremely rare. It is also no coincidence that the Redux Orchestra was born in Berlin, a city known for its thriving, overnight club culture. Meyers had been in the city for about a decade when he starting planning the Club Redux events, ten years of conducting, composing and meeting DJs and producers as well as classical musicians.

Meyers, Bates and Frick express the difficulty of taking their hybrid music on tour; financial and logistical demands pose a significant barrier to the music's portability. Meyers describes a typical concert presenter's request for the Redux Orchestra: "Well, we can't afford to take eighteen or nineteen musicians on tour, but if you pare it down to four or so..."[177] Not only is it costly to transport and pay this many performers, but highly skilled instrumentalists usually make a living by playing in many different orchestras, ensembles or bands, so coordinating a group tour around everyone's performance schedule is nearly impossible. Bates also relates the intricacy of the rehearsals themselves: "Mercury Soul is really hard. I mean, it's *really* hard to do. It takes a heck of a lot; the production timeline for these shows is literally by the minute. We have something happening every second; there's always a light that's changing or a musician who's moving to a new place."[178] Frick says hiring an 11-piece ensemble is

[177] Meyers, personal interview (2011)
[178] Bates, personal interview (2011)

"economically silly," "a huge pain in the ass" and "so much work."[179]

Asked if Mercury Soul could be replicated by other composer-DJs, conductors and ensembles, conductor Benjamin Shwarz talks about the interludes as being complex and dependent on Bates. "There are lots of electronic music composers but not a lot of them are DJs...literally, we transition from commercial DJ music to 'Interlude to Stravinsky.' So there's no reason somebody else couldn't do it, but it could be tricky."[180] I have yet to find another event that connects ensemble music and DJ sets in this way.

The Nonclassical or Yellow Lounge model is much easier to present. Both formats – as well as others I have come across in Berlin, such as Kulturradio's Klassik-Lounge and the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester's Casual Concert series, or the Klassik Im Club events in Munich – involve live acts interspersed with DJ sets, but there are no rehearsed transitions, as in the Mercury Soul nights, and the live music is not hybrid instrumental-EDM, like that of Meyers. And, this model highlights a new setting for classical music, but is not a dance party. It still centers around music for listening alone. Because the club classical format is simpler, these events are easier to plan. If one's goal is to reach a wider audience for classical music, this format is a great and feasible model. Felix Mesenburg talks about planning a Yellow Lounge show only one week in advance. He books one artist or existing ensemble often signed to Deutsche Grammophon, books one or two DJs (such as David Canisius or Felix Mesenburg himself) and one VJ, does no marketing, and every show sells out. With a Bates performance, he has to assemble the right players from the local orchestra to perform all of the selected repertoire, coordinate with the conductor and director, and rehearse new music (including his interludes that bind the classical and

[179] Frick, personal interview (2013)
[180] Shwartz, personal interview (2013)

DJ sets). Bates presents lengthy events with an operatic attention to visual and musical detail, what he views as a true club night, as opposed to what he characterizes as "decorative, cosmetic" Yellow Lounge or Nonclassical nights. Interestingly, Bates' and Prokofiev's goals for their club events are similar. Yet Bates, a club DJ himself, recognizes the value of fluidity from electronica shows and puts much effort into his interludes, priming the audience's ears for each successive set.

Aside from the musical novelty of a classical composer making live dance music with a large ensemble, instrumental-EDM is held back by logistical constraints. Club classical is easier to produce and more widespread.

A "Dissertation Dance Party"

Since arriving at Duke University, my compositions have referenced electronic dance music to varying degrees. Early works combined complex electronic beats, usually precomposed, with instrumental composition. These pieces, performed in recital halls, achieved some of my musical goals yet fell flat in terms of their presentation. Through these concert experiences, I realized that instrumental music with dance beats did not make sense in a concert hall, that I was not fulfilled as a composer or a listener by pulse-based, electro-acoustic music in a formal space. Sitting down with polite clapping before and after was not the way to digest this music.

While in graduate school, I also began performing solo electronic dance sets on laptop, often playing live saxophone as well, at festivals and music clubs. Like anything else, I learned as I went, and I came to realize that with dance music, one of the most important elements is a steady beat. Too much experimentation with time signatures or

long pulse-less sections distract the audience and keep it from the primary goal of the music: dancing. In addition, EDM is a highly physical music; not only do listeners move their bodies to interact with it, but they expect massive bass frequencies whose vibrations can be felt in one's body. Powerful subwoofers are required to produce such heavy bass, which is a standard in live EDM. Concert halls are not equipped with adequate sound systems to emit such bass, and these typically reverberant halls are poor sonic environments for electronic music, which requires a drier space to retain the music's definition and wide frequency range. And in order to achieve the power and energy associated with live EDM, including physically stimulating bass, the music needs to be louder than is customary in concert halls. At performances of my music, live instruments would get lost amidst the electronics and the halls' reverberation, and the sound always seemed either too loud or too soft. An undesirable social setting for my music and significant sonic limitations were both major reasons to look outside the concert hall.

After years of composing concert works and playing dance sets on my own, I decided to truly fuse the two experiences. I would not write another ensemble work with electronic beats, but compose a long, instrumental composition for live instrumental ensemble and active laptop DJ and situate it within a standard, 50- to 60-minute dance set at a music club. The piece would have prominent instrumental and electronic elements and would function as an engaging work of instrumental-EDM. The format was what would be most innovative: this would be a doctoral dissertation composition with the primary goal of being functional, late-night dance music.

Much like Meyers' Redux Orchestra series in Berlin in 2005-06, my goal was to adhere as much as possible to a dance club format. Durham, NC is not Berlin, and clubs

close, rather than heat up, at 2:00 AM. I also needed to share the performance with some other graduate composers and work with other event planners to make the format satisfactory for all involved, and appropriate for department funding. I was told the show needed to be on Duke's campus, which made the Duke Coffeehouse, which hosts usually rock shows on weekends, the obvious choice. The show was to include other graduate composers who had written for the visiting ensemble, Wet Ink. Through compromise we settled on a 9:00 PM start time, with an opening set of two graduate compositions. After this, at 10:00 PM, would be my set, and two more sets from a DJ duo called Beat Report and another DJ, Treee City, would follow. The show was set for April 6, 2012.

I liked the idea of an opening set of graduate compositions but worried about the clash between two concert works and the dance music to follow. The large, varied arsenals of instruments and performers would necessitate lengthy set changes. By 9:00 PM, the club had nearly filled up. We left some chairs, couches, and large bean bags on the floor so people could stand or sit during this first set, and kept some house lights on. I could sense a tension between those more accustomed to concert music and some who came for the dance portion and waited, sometimes impatiently, for the first set to conclude. The two graduate composers had both expressed concern about excess noise during their pieces; one was adamant that no one open a beer during his work. This type of expectation was unreasonable considering the Duke Coffeehouse is a popular music venue with a bring-your-own-beer policy, yet not unreasonable in general for a graduate composition student. I knew these two were not happy about the setting for their works and was grateful that my desires for mine, the only dissertation composition of the night, had taken precedence.

There were, as I expected, nearly chaotic set changes between recording sessions that preceded the concert, between the two works of the first set, and between sets on the rather small stage. These types of technical issues, involving not only instruments, music stands, and stand lights but microphones, onstage monitors and other electronics, were more complicated than at a typical concert hall or dance club. But remarkably, sets began close to the planned schedule.

Musical and social goals largely achieved

I do not subscribe to the 1980s postmodern idea that "there is nothing new under the sun," that every permutation of art has already been created and, therefore, art is nothing but an unoriginal pastiche of quotations.[181] I do think that the potential for new and innovative music is virtually endless. But for years, I have wondered if pure authenticity or musical invention is the most innovative pursuit as a composer. To be clear, I do consider my composition innovative and exciting; as I detail in this study, instrumental-EDM, while it has great potential, is still rare.

However, the very idea of creating music that is daringly different may not be as bold as we are taught, and perhaps the presentation of such music can in fact break more ground than the music itself. An innovation in style or process might inspire audience members in new ways, spur on composers, and perhaps even usher in a new school of composition. But innovation in format or presentation can bring in completely new audiences, opening a composers' music to whole host of previously inaccessible listeners. By changing the setting for academic music, and by connecting with the audience

[181] See Fredric Jameson's *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991).

through popular music and dance, I sought to reach both familiar and new audience members and set an example for how a university music department performance, and concert music in general, can go in a different direction.

Overall, I was pleased with the music and the audience. I think the amplified, live instruments and the electronics blended well to create convincing instrumental-EDM. I composed it in the same way I have composed for years, with repetition, subtle variation and jazz, funk, EDM, and minimalist influences. The audience did not dance as much as I had hoped, but the informal atmosphere during my set was exactly what my music demanded.

At the start of my set, the house lights came down and various colored lights were activated. I opened with about 20 minutes of my solo EDM, performing three tracks focused on acoustic samples: the first heavily sampled a female Tibetan singer named Yungchen Lhamo; the second was a track with cello and banjo lines; and the third was a solo version of an original piece for bassoon and electronics. Towards the end of this third track, the octet and conductor of my piece came onstage, and as DJ I transitioned into a section during which the live instruments entered, improvising over the harmony of my electronics. This improvisation led into the beginning of my 30-minute dissertation composition, *Alleys Of Your Mind*. The first and third movements are performed at a constant 124 beats-per-minute, a pace on the slower side but still within EDM conventions. Much of the second movement, however, has a half-time feel (at 62 beats-per-minute). A drastic tempo shift within a set is atypical of EDM, but I wanted to give the audience a rest from the up-tempo music, and reference the fast-slow-fast movement format that is quite common among classical works, the culture in which I began

composing roughly ten years ago. The half-time feel made it easy to transition seamlessly back into the former tempo of 124 beats-per-minute.

During my set, I found that audience members were faced with the same question posed to Brandt Brauer Frick: do we dance, or listen, or both? There is no doubt that the audience moved to the beats less than I had hoped. But the reasons why are complex, involving the music, the sound, the programming, the audience demographics, and the city itself. Many told me that they had never heard music like mine before, and so much new and stimulating information made them more inclined to stand and listen rather than dance. The general musical feedback I got from audience members was very positive.

But there were problems. Coming directly after a set of recently composed concert music, my dance set seemed jarring, and a 10:00 PM start time is earlier than most dance music sets. Wet Ink's sound engineer, Sam Pluta, was able to make the Coffehouse's speaker system sound decent, but the monitors and subwoofers were not up to EDM standards. And Durham, a small southern city, has a very limited EDM scene and virtually no historical context for the music. The musical landscape is dominated by folk and indie rock bands, and many Durhamites are unfamiliar with live EDM, not to mention greater dance club culture. The crowd itself was quite mixed, from senior citizens and older professors to Duke undergraduates. In the end, people digested the music in the way they wanted, and those who felt like dancing did so. The event was a social experiment, and while the results were slightly different that I had hoped, the result was satisfying.

After my set, some audience members left, and while the numbers were lower, a strong contingent remained, and others joined, dancing late into the night to the music of

Beat Report and Treee City.[182]

Alleys Of Your Mind and Instrumental-EDM

Alleys Of Your Mind, with its dance music focus, is certainly more akin to the work of Ari Benjamin Meyers or The Brandt Brauer Frick Ensemble than a Mercury Soul or Nonclassical event. It shares much with the Redux Orchestra gigs and Brandt Brauer Frick Ensemble shows: it is instrumental-EDM, I have performed it in music clubs and many have danced to it,[183] and I have situated it within larger programs of EDM, with additional DJ sets, at these clubs. As much as possible, I have integrated my instrumental-EDM into the existing dance music culture of this area of North Carolina. If I were to perform it in a city like Berlin or New York, both with thriving instrumental and EDM scenes, I would learn more about its viability as dance music. With limited information based on its premiere and three subsequent performances, it appears to fit well within the emerging practice of instrumental-EDM.

As a long-form work, *Alleys Of Your Mind* is closer to Meyers' *Symphony X* than to The Brandt Brauer Frick Ensemble's music. But one innovation I attempted was the inclusion of documentary field recordings into my composition. While recovering in Duke's Neuroscience ICU, I recorded the beeps of the numerous machines in my room as well as my voice and nurse Brooke Anderson's. I incorporated many of these sounds into

[182] Beat Report is a DJ duo of Jil Christensen and Stephen Levitin (also known as Apple Juice Kid) of Chapel Hill and Carrboro, North Carolina. Treee City is Patrick Phelps-McKeown of Durham, NC.
[183] After the premiere of *Alleys Of Your Mind*, I performed it three more times in 2012, twice at The Pinhook in Durham, and once at Mack and Mack, a converted dress shop in Greensboro, NC. These performances involved reduced instrumentation. The first, in May, consisted of only clarinet, french horn, and me on tenor saxophone. One August performance included flute, clarinet, tenor saxophone, bassoon, and horn, and the other involved only clarinet, tenor saxophone, and bassoon. Something felt lacking with a reduced instrumentation, and when I played saxophone, I could not adjust electronic effects live, which would have enhanced the music.

the second and third movements of *Alleys Of Your Mind*, transposing the beeps into melodic patterns and cutting and repeating short samples of Brooke's voice. Brooke asked me why I wanted to record the mechanical sounds of the ICU, sounds that haunted me for my two weeks there and aggravated my already excruciating headaches. "I'll turn it into something good," I told her. "That's the beauty of art – you can change things." I first introduce these recorded words early in the second movement of *Alleys Of Your Mind*. This rather simple idea was deeply relevant in more ways than one: I wanted to transform the samples into musical material; I wanted to alter the tradition of dissertation concerts at Duke and influence the world of instrumental-EDM; and I wanted, eventually, to turn the scariest and most difficult experience of my life into positive personal growth.

Chapter 3: Interview Excerpts

Gabriel Prokofiev

Personal interview, London
July 8, 2011

Composer-DJ Gabriel Prokofiev (b. 1975, London), the grandson of Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev, started with music when he was ten years old, playing in pop bands and eventually writing songs. He studied classical composition and electronic music at Birmingham and York universities and has produced and performed various dance, "sonic art," and African music under a number of aliases. In 2003, he co-founded an electronic music record label that would become Nonclassical Records. The label has released fourteen albums that consist of original, instrumental music and electronic remixes of these works, and hosts a monthly club night. I interviewed Prokofiev at the Nonclassical studios in Shoreditch, London on July 8, 2011. The following constitutes an edited version of our conversation. Bolded statements are my questions, followed by Prokofiev's answers.

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How did the club nights come about?

I put contemporary classical music in night clubs because I wanted my friends to come and hear my music, you know, and I just thought, I knew they weren't going to come to the classical concerts, so that's why it all started. So initially the aim was...about the live performances, playing new classical music in a setting that felt more appropriate for our generation, really. And as well for contemporary classical music, often it's quite – though it's connected to older classical traditions – often it doesn't really suit the concert hall, a lot of the pieces. And you suddenly put it in a club night or a bar or something, and it feels – or even in an art gallery, I mean, they've been doing that in New York for years,

since the 70s, all the minimalist guys – and it kind of finds itself a new space, so that's really good.

The DJing happened because I put the first one in a nightclub and then I thought, what music is gonna happen before and after the live sets? There's gonna have to be a DJ, and I just couldn't think who would be the DJ. I managed to find one guy who DJed at the end of the night, and he did really left field electronica, kind of IDM sort of stuff. But prior to that, I DJed, and that was before the record label even existed, so I just had to kind of mix up some left field electronica with various contemporary classical beats. I even had a classic Photek vinyl that I played at 33 BPM, so it was meant to be 45, so the beats were really slow, and so that worked really cool and I mixed that with Varese or something like that...That worked really well. And also it's the whole thing of continuous music and creating a whole vibe and a whole evening.

And then once the Nonclassical label started – that was all going back to 2004 – that started to provide ideal music to DJ alongside contemporary classical performances. If you just try and DJ pure contemporary classical music, often the way it's produced, and the nature of the music, means the dynamic range is just so great, in the kind of lively bar atmosphere it just disappears, and then suddenly you'll hear this loud crescendo and a kind of scream, and then there'll be nothing – it just doesn't really work. So the remixes we've got are really cool because the production angle and the production standards are more geared towards PA systems and being played in a sort of noisy environment. But it's still got contemporary classical sounds in it. What's happened now is the DJing has become a really integral part of the night.

In terms of the dance element, how do you think it works as a club?

Well, what I'd say is that a lot of the remixes we're DJing, and then other tracks that aren't on Nonclassical we DJ, are potentially dance tunes, but since the kind of electronic dance music explosion I guess in the early '90s, late '80s...As the 90s went on, increasingly people would play pumping dance music in bars when people weren't dancing...They're just sitting, having a drink, and in the meantime there's quite a tough beat. That happens everywhere now, isn't it? It's music for dancing but people aren't dancing to it. So I think that attitude, you find that a lot in London and I think people are a [more] bit shy about dancing, actually, in the UK than they are in America. In America they'll get to a club and go "hey, let's dance," and they go for it. In the UK a lot of people need to get quite a few drinks down and get a bit drunk to kind of lose their inhibitions. And, so, therefore, a lot of the stuff we play is danceable, it's dance music, but people don't go there thinking, *I'm gonna go down to Nonclassical and dance*. Every now and again you get some people who are like, up for it, and they'll have a bit of a dance, but that's normally right toward the end of the night.

The way that you set up the nights – is there a dance floor, or is it more just tables?

It depends on the venue. Previously we've had places where there's been a dance floor. I always liked the idea of having a standing audience, coming up and standing [next] to the stage, but then sometimes when people really want to watch the live music people prefer to sit down, and one thing you can get sometimes is that people feel a bit shy of standing right up against the stage and so you sometimes get that kind of curve, that sort of horseshoe shape of space in front of the stage and everyone stands kind of with their backs to the walls, which is really annoying. So in the club where we are now,

actually, they have tables set up there and we've kind of rolled with that. So it does actually make it slightly less dance friendly.

Do you try to make a seamless transition – like, there'll be a set of the ensemble and then [the DJ will] pick it right up?

Yeah, totally, the idea is just to keep it rolling. And as much as possible, the DJ sets should react to the live performances, so sometimes I always look for some material that's similar instrumentation to what's just been onstage so that connects with it. Often it's people from the Nonclassical label performing, so when they perform tracks we've released, obviously then we can play the remixes straight after, and that's always really cool.

What's your general sense about the ensembles and how they relate to the remix of their performances, and the composers, the remixing of their works?

They think it's really cool; they love it. Everyone's really happy to be remixed and they find it really fascinating to hear what people have done. Every now and again you get a remix that the ensemble or the composer doesn't like as well, and then that might not go on the CD, or we might persuade them and say, “look, come on, it's not so bad.” And there are remixes I don't like sometimes, but I can say my opinion but the artists – the performer and the composer of the album – they've gotta have their say as well, so it's kind of democratic. And remixing, there is an element of musical experiment, so sometimes there are ones that you think, *well, I'm not kind of into this, but someone's put a lot of work into it, and it's an interesting concept, so let's just put it on the album*.

If someone ended up coming up with a remix for one of these CDs that was very, very popular sounding and had potential to make the charts, is that something that the label would be open to?

Yeah, I mean, I don't see why not. It depends what that means...But if someone did something that was a real stroke of genius that kind of could appeal, could be a hit, but also used the original material in a really clever way, that would be fantastic; it'd be really fun. 'Cause it was always the idea of the remixes to appeal to a wider audience and to try and draw people in who wouldn't normally listen to contemporary classical music. Maybe the production style, the type of beat that's in the remix, people are familiar with, so they kind of go, "this is cool, oh wow, it's got some kind of unusual classical sort of sounds in there," and it's a kind of covert way of getting people to maybe listen to harmonies and textures and instrumentation they wouldn't normally listen to, and then they might even be able to enjoy listening to the original version. That was sort of one of the ideas.

We're coming from the classical side, we're bringing together two worlds, and sometimes really traditional classical people have said that we're fusion, we're crossover, which are kind of putdowns in the classical world, I'd say. In Europe, especially, people think that's not serious classical music...So, the danger is if we did something that became massive, if something kind of really lifted off and there was this whole craze of the remixes, on one hand that would be really cool...in the classical world suddenly there could be a kind of backlash. And that whole thing of wanting to be artistically really credible and having weight, we definitely want that. But if we feel musically that it's solid, then there would never be a problem, and if people do kind of go, "oh god, they've just sold out," that's just their narrow-mindedness.

It seems like remixers are kind of converting what might be inaccessible to more of a palatable kind of thing for a generation of the younger folks.

That was definitely one of the kind of aims, yeah.

Do you think that it's more of a musical change that is more significant for changing the audience, or do you think the venue is perhaps the draw, that it's not in a concert hall?

It's the whole mix, it's the whole package. I mean, everything's connected. People, younger generations, just feel I think more comfortable, more relaxed in a bar/club setting; it's just more enjoyable. If you can listen to some really great music, be having a drink of beer or wine or something at the same time, and then hang out there, make a whole evening of it, have a night out, and then there's cool DJing, and you get to just be in an environment where the music's different to the norm. That's just gonna be appealing. A brilliant concert is a brilliant concert, so if it's in a really formal concert hall, it's still a brilliant concert and you still enjoy it, and you go to the bar afterwards and that's fine. But for a lot of people they feel more at home there. And so the venue is very important, but the fact that we have the DJs makes it complete.

To give you an example there's a club called Limelight... It's a really classic live venue. Nowadays it's mainly jazz, more jazz that's there, but the whole range; people do showcases there. And basically they do a monthly classical thing there, but they don't have a DJ. So you've got the nice informal setting. Everyone's sitting around at tables in a kind of jazz club sort of vibe, and it's really informal. And then when I went there it was unbelievable; the solo pianist had finished playing, I think he'd been playing some Bach and maybe some Chopin as well or something, a really intense concert, really nice; classical, not that contemporary. And then afterwards just a standard sort of pub/bar CD just came on, I think it was Oasis or something, and it was so stupid. You've gone to this effort of creating this vibe, and then afterwards you put on any old shitty rock CD. And

that's weird, it's like they haven't thought it through...But it's a nice, refreshing change, the fact that they're doing this kind of concert in the informal setting, but they're kind of misturning [*sic*] it into creating a really cool vibe. I guess it feels more like all we're bringing, we've brought classical music into a different venue and then as soon as the classical music stops, it goes back to being the kind of rock venue that it was. But then you lose the chance of kind of really making it a complete experience.

Have you ever come across original compositions that involve definitely a heavy EDM focus with instrumental writing that may achieve similar things that your remixes are achieving in a way?

Well, I mean, some of our original tracks on Nonclassical before they've been remixed are already a bit like that, I suppose. The *Concerto for Turntables*, the third movement, that's already got this kind of heavy-ish beat in it, so some of it is already heading that way. There's a guy called Nick Barch, who's Swiss, and he's got his own genre of minimalism, and he has a quartet and a quintet based on a sort of more jazz ensemble, with bass clarinet, double bass, piano, I think, and percussion, but he does these loops that go round and round and slowly get out of phase, and I often put one of them in my DJ set, and they sound like minimalist kind of classical stuff but with this kind of beat-y edge...

I often play Stravinsky *Ebony Concerto*, because that's got really cool percussion parts; it's got grooves in it; it's got kind of funk. That works, that's obviously an original...It's interesting though – specifically for DJing, it's that whole production thing, and the way classical music tends to be recorded is sort of a lighter way. Tanzy Davies actually, her stuff, *Neon*, we've just put out an album of her stuff. *Neon*, even before we recorded it, I used to DJ that quite often, because that's got these...high hat patterns and

percussion patters that are very urban-inspired, so that always works DJing...And some electroacoustic stuff, but normally I mix it with something else, like, say, Stockhausen *Kontakte*. I often mix that over other tracks, because by itself, you can have like thirty seconds of it and then you drop in something with more of a regular pulse...

The Alarm Will Sound albums – I played one of them last night – there's two or three tracks on there that I like to DJ. The best one is the "Blue Calax" one...Their big breakthrough was this orchestration for sinfonietta of this Aphex Twin album [*Acoustica*]. So that's obviously playing electronic dance music acoustically so obviously that's going to have that kind of connection.

Mason Bates

Personal interview (phone)
September 24, 2011

Mason Bates (b. 1977, Richmond, VA) of San Francisco writes beat-based, electro-acoustic symphonic works for the United States' best orchestras and runs a club night in various cities called Mercury Soul, which features an evening-length ebb and flow of his own DJ sets and instrumental chamber music. Bates bought his turntables while studying a Juilliard in New York City in 2000, and he has been DJing, as well as composing, ever since. He earned his PhD in music composition from the University of California at Berkeley in 2008. I interviewed Bates over the phone on September 24, 2011. The following constitutes an edited version of our conversation. Bolded statements are my questions, followed by Bates' answers.

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Tell me about the nights at Club Mezzanine. I'm curious how these work, how the DJ sets and the chamber music overlap or interact, how it's staged and things like that.

Well, Mercury Soul is a "something" party with DJs and electronics that's visited by a SWAT team of classical players. That's more or less what it is. It's not like a Poisson Rouge thing with people basically sitting down and looking at music but they're in a hip space. That to me is kind of cosmetic. If you really want a different thing, which is, pull out the seats, have the audience kind of float around, and figure out how you go from the space of a DJ set to listening to, say, Nancarrow or Ligeti. In order to do that, you can't just push stop on the turntables because the whole idea is it needs to flow. So it becomes about three things: there's the DJ sets, the classical sets, and then there's the space in between. In order to change the listening perception of a thousand people, I think you just

have to do it on the musical level and on the production and lighting level. So there will be a five- to eight-minute interlude that comes out of a DJ set and…you start to realize that the chamber orchestra is fading in and playing over this new track, and they kind of grow in importance. While that's happening, the lighting is starting to brighten on them and become more like a concert hall. And the electronics start to fade away. So over those five- to eight-minute segments there is a real shift in the space, and it's basically a way to get people to notice the classical musicians and start listening to them before they start their set.

Wow, I've never heard about that, and that's really fascinating. It sounds like it might do the trick. It's really working with the audience and addressing the different types of attention that you may have for the different types of music.

So Mercury Soul, there's a very clear social goal, because, sure, I do compose interludes for Mercury Soul, and I'll have some of my pieces as part of the classical sets, but overall, it's a kind of curation. It's basically my version of an outreach event. I really want to bring classical music to people who haven't encountered it and who think it's too intimidating. Honestly, Alex, you can't open *The New York Times* and not come across some article about somebody doing something in a club. But for me, it's like, big deal. Just because you change the background scenery, what are you actually doing to the experience? I really want to change the experience, and when you're sitting down and listening to music, you hear it a different way than when you're floating around. In order to really make it an experience, say, like being in a museum, you really have to try and bridge that gap. I don't mean to level a lot of criticism at Poisson Rouge or anything like that, but that seems to me a little bit behind the times. I feel like Mercury Soul is really pushing the envelope, and it's expensive and hard; it's not easy.

And you must have to rehearse the transitions, because they have to know what interlude they're playing over what track of yours, or what track you're spinning, and you've got to have cues. Is there a conductor? Is it a small chamber orchestra or something?

That's right, the conductor, Benjamin Schwartz, is actually a co-creator of the project. He was at the San Francisco Symphony for a while, and he is a critical part of it, because there's no way you could coordinate all the stuff without having a conductor. He's fantastic, I really like him. The ensemble changes depending on who hosts us. If New World Symphony does it, then we actually have a full orchestra. When we did it in Chicago, we just used a dozen players from the orchestra.

What kind of music do you spin, and do people end up dancing? Is it more dance music or more lounge, background music?

It's become more techno-based over the years. We try to get people moving. It's really dependent on the space. Most of the time we have people dancing, and when it's a huge space like the New World Symphony, and of course it's a club town like Miami, it's not a hard sell. People start going nuts. The thing is, is that on all levels, these two elements have to compromise. The DJ sets have to be more trippy and out there than a commercial club would have, and the classical segments need to be amplified and a little bit more groovy than just a standard new music concert, even on the level of volume. The DJ segments are a little bit less loud than you could get at a classic club, and the classical segments are a hell of a lot louder than you would get at a concert hall. They need to kind of meet each other and so, to answer your questions, I'll definitely drop very groovy, dance-heavy stuff. But it's always going to be a bit more underground than what you might find at Mezzanine on a Saturday night.

I've read a lot of articles and seen interviews of you and stuff. They generally say

that you spin trip-hop. But I don't think a lot of the authors really are familiar with some of the actual artists. Are there techno or trip-hop artists that you generally like to go for?

I've gotten more into techno lately, as I've gotten closer to Chicago. Chicago and Detroit are the birthplace of house and hard techno. Somebody like Richie Hawtin is huge, he's incredible, I love his style, it's very underground, yet it's also incredibly appealing and attractive and accessible. He's an example of someone that I certainly emulate as a techno DJ. I probably emphasize more the techno part, because the trip-hop stuff really only happens at the beginning of the party, and then it becomes more amped up…

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Mercury Soul is really hard, I mean, it's really hard to do. It takes a hell of a lot – the production timeline for these shows is literally by the minute. I mean, we have stuff happening every minute. There's a light that changes or a musician that moves to a new place. And it's kind of like a wedding: you want it to feel improvisatory and fun, but there's someone with a walkie talkie who's sweating it out. And, if you're just doing a concert with a little bit of DJing before and after, which I've seen a bunch, that's fine. It's more of a decorative, cosmetic thing. In order to really get a change – like the Yellow Lounge in Berlin, is a good example. Guys are mixing Beethoven records on turntables; it's the most absurd thing I've ever seen in my life. And then they have a concert, and then the DJs go back to – you know, it can't just be a decorative thing, it's gotta really relate.

In speaking about narrative and perhaps form, have you ever thought about the DJ set and the symphony and perhaps the parallels in form that they may have?

Not really. The symphonic form is kind of up and down; it will have its high

points, its fast music and its slow music. DJ sets, generally speaking, are some kind of an arc. Certain symphonic pieces are arc-based; others might be fast-slow-fast. Whereas a DJ set is so much like an airplane humming down the runway. You've got to slowly build it and sustain it, and if you go all the way through the night, if you do a party that goes forever, there's a point when you have to start coming down. Most of the time I'm on the way up, but if you actually do a full party then there's the business of how to land again.

It sounds like on your album [*Digital Loom*, 2009] you almost had a couple remixes of your work. There was a Chanticleer remix and there was a string piece, *Amber Interlude*, that sounds like kind of an acoustic-style remix.

Exactly. That might be more along the lines of what you're talking about with Prokofiev. That album was, I wanted to have little remixes of the pieces between tracks, so, exactly, I took the string quartet and played with it a little bit.

Do you include those in your live DJ sets?

I've included the *Amber* one because it kind of works. The live DJ sets, I generally include stuff specifically made for Mercury Soul that's a little bit more club-based. Those things on the album in the context of classical music seem pretty groovy, but they're a little bit too far afield to throw into a club.

Bates and I continued to discuss his electro-acoustic orchestral music. He talks about click tracks in this context, but his comments can be applied to his Mercury Soul events as well.

I'm not a big fan of click tracks. They look weird, and they look kind of like – they just look bizarre, and from an audience perspective, it's like, "why is he plugging in?" So the way I do it is that, when there are beats, they are like an audible click track – you stay with that beat. And when there aren't beats, you're free…

Are there pretty good monitors that the conductor can have right by him?

Exactly. It's a critical thing, they've gotta have monitors onstage.

Yeah, definitely, because it's hard, even in chamber music in my experience, for classical performers to stay on the beat; they often get behind. But I guess when you have top-flight musicians and a really good conductor, then it generally works, huh?

Yeah, it's a little big like they got a barge, you know, they've got this ocean liner, and they can't turn on a dime. So, there's inherently something weird about playing to a beat. But it's actually, more and more, it's not really an issue for conductors now. A lot of conductors will unfortunately have had to do one of those film or video game concerts, and they've gotta learn to be with the beat, and so I just try to make it so the beats come and go so you have these moments of expansiveness.

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Email to the author
September 19, 2013

Your goal is similar to that of Nonclassical or Yellow Lounge, yet you include an element of real dance music and you create this whole, programmed night with instrumental interludes and transitions. I'm trying to figure out what the difference is in your thinking – despite the similar goal of bringing people into classical music.

Yellow Lounge and Nonclassical, like many other "alt classical" endeavors, offer primarily a change of scenery. Classical performances are dropped into a club, with the hope that the more relaxed and familiar environment will create a more conducive listening mindset. *Mercury Soul* goes for a far deeper and more integrated approach, looking to explore the pregnant musical possibilities when these two non-vocal musics are heard side-by-side. EDM, with no lyrics or lead singer at its center, offers much more intricate harmonies, rhythms, and textures than other pop music. That's why it integrates

so beautifully with classical music, and why we go to such great lengths to create an immersive, high-production experience.

With your interludes guiding them, do people end up listening to the classical sets in the same way they would in a concert hall? Do they listen the way you intend?

The goal of *Mercury Soul* is to open the eyes of both classical and electronica audiences. The interludes are through-composed electro-acoustic pieces that are specifically written to precede or follow the specific classical pieces on the program. We want to bring people to the highly focused listening that makes classical music so special.

George Lewis wrote "we pretty much listen to, and enjoy, the same music that is listened to by other people we like or with whom we identify." Do you agree?

I respectfully disagree. People are attracted to different art for myriad reasons, and sometimes those people are very different from us. Octogenarian classical patrons have bobbed their heads to my *Mothership* just like electronica fans who have no experience with concert music. It's music that helps us cross those divides; I don't see it as self-selecting.

Ari Benjamin Meyers

Personal interview (phone)
October 10, 2011

Meyers (b. 1972, New York) has fused his classically-influenced, instrumental composition with electronic dance idioms, presenting this instrumental-EDM in clubs. His Berlin-based Redux Orchestra is a seventeen-piece "club orchestra" that has performed his original music as well as live remixes of music by various artists, from American minimalist composers to EDM producers. Meyers arrived in Berlin in 1996 on a Fulbright scholarship for opera conducting and has never left. In the last few years, Meyers has focused on the art world, creating music-based installations and sometimes collaborating with visual artists or choreographers. I interviewed Meyers over the phone on October 10, 2011. The following constitutes an edited version of our conversation. Bolded statements are my questions, followed by Meyers' answers.

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…It was musical, and musically driven, the desire to work with electronic music, to work with DJs, to make a kind of dance music, all of that kind of thing…and at the same time it had a lot to do with the space because I had been getting more and more sort of frustrated and fed up with, especially in Europe although in America I think it's similar…a kind of contemporary music scene that was essentially happening in concert halls that were three hundred years old, happening in a situation that hasn't changed in hundreds of years. Basically you have a concert on a stage in front of an audience, and the lights go down and maybe you have a little variation, but basically you have a kind of setup that was completely for me, at some point, it just became completely uninteresting and completely uninspiring. I had no interest in writing music for this situation, for this

kind of space. In a way I think it's a real issue with contemporary music just in general that it's become a bit of a ghetto, and it's done it to itself a little bit. We're partly ourselves to blame, but you go to concerts, you see the same people. It tends to be the same kind of music for the same audience in the same kind of situation, and really there's nothing very modern about that actually. It's in a way quite reactive for me; it's quite in a sense conservative and old-fashioned, even to the point here you have very much so in Germany. In fact, it's totally conservative.

…So for all these reasons, the idea, in a club, for instance, was super interesting, super attractive, especially at that time, even though it's not that long ago, but as these things are...there really wasn't anything like that happening. It seems now hard to believe because it seems like almost every week I see some concert taking place, some classical music concert taking place in a club.

And for each [Club Redux gig at Watergate] you had to do an incredible amount of orchestrating or original composition or collaborating?

It depended a bit. It was different things, like with compositions...especially Reich…with Glass I was a bit more free. It really depended on the piece, and then of course there were pieces that were perfect for this kind of thing. The best example, the ultimate *In C*, Terry Riley…So there were certain pieces…where I would keep the composition almost exact but I was thinking about sound, or I guess you could say orchestration, but it was much more intuitive than sitting and arranging a score. I was much more thinking…even a simple question like, *would it be interesting to add beats to this piece? If we do add beats, how could it work?*

Was the Redux Orchestra a set number of players and a set instrumentation or did it change very time?

…You start to get a group of musicians who you just feel simpatico with; they understand you. Best case, they like your music, and in this case I guess it was just a bit more extreme; I needed musicians who were great players but also could improvise, but also liked to be loud and didn't have the issue that a lot of classical *(oh it's too loud),* and musicians who were open to electronics. And so just slowly, over the years, I built up a kind of a pool of musicians. Even though, oddly enough, we're doing less now, but when we do a concert or do something, now it's crystalized much more into a kind of set group of about 19 musicians or so. But back then, it was more of a pool of people who I could call on to do crazy projects – and they were crazy nights, because some of them did go from 11 until 8 in the morning, so you need musicians who are up for that. Not all musicians consider that a great gig, you know.

It's easy to glorify Berlin as sort of the hub of hip music, but it definitely seems that, of all the places in the world, you would probably have the highest likelihood of finding those types of versatile, open-minded players, in a city like Berlin that has such a lively electronic dance scene to begin with.

It certainly helps, and it certainly helped that the club scene in general is, still is, was, is such a part of Berlin culture…The club scene I think in Berlin is somehow very vital…It just seemed like the place where people met and would see each other, and people under whatever influence would have ideas: let's work on something together, let's make something together. I think in Berlin…it made sense to try something like this in the club.

Have you seen other types of club orchestras or club bands like what you've done in terms of live instruments, electronics, or at least beat-based music...an actual dance set as opposed to a chamber set that happens to be in a club?

No, I have to say, not really…Of course there are things that touch on it…Those

concerts at Watergate [were] the right people coming together at the right time and making this thing. I think one reason why maybe more people don't do it is just that it is quite hard to do, even if you have…this pool of musicians, but still, to do it well, and to do it right, and the whole idea of how do you rehearse something like that, and where do you rehearse, and then if you're working with DJs, how do you rehearse with them…I don't say this in a very boastful way, but it's very difficult to do, and that's probably one reason why at some point I [started] doing it less, because it was eating up so much of my time, and I wanted to try some other things, and also why I guess you don't see it so much.

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…For me, when I first thought about doing it and started doing it, the form was just as important as the music, so the first rule I said was, ok, when I talked to people about it I said, *the main point is, it's a club night*. It's a real – honest to God – maybe we do it on a Thursday, not wanting to compete with the big boys on Friday and Saturday…but the first rule was that it's a real – it's a club night. Whatever happens, however the club night works, from the time, starting at midnight, and going till nine in the morning, from the drinking, and from everything, not telling people to be quiet, and that they dance – that was super important to me…Then you always have to figure out how to integrate whatever it was that you wanted to do or present into that…It was important for me to have DJs on the set, and I would always talk to them about if it was a night of Philip Glass or a night of Steve Reich or something, and we would discuss ways of integrating…but it's important that they really do their thing…because it was clear to me that we couldn't play, we can't physically play for twelve hours or fourteen hours. We

also need different shifts in the night. So in a way I was really booking these things. I really became, for a while, like a club promoter. And in the end I think that's one reason why I did it a bit less because it just takes up a lot of time and can also be stressful. Working with the whole club world can be very…Just making sure people show up on time, very banal things. Where are you? Who's got the drugs for so and so? It became very like running a club for those nights…So that was as important in a way as the music.

Did you ever consider pairing down the instrumentation a little bit and turning it into an ongoing band that you tour with, a steady group?

I did, because a lot of people told me to do that, and a lot of presenters said, "Well, we can't afford to take 19, 18 musicians on tour, but if you pare it down to four or something." …We tried some things…I'm not ideologically opposed, but, in general, to me, now it's less interesting to tour and less interesting to give concerts. Again, maybe this sounds super strange coming from a musician or a composer, I'm at a place now where I'm not so interested in giving concerts, as weird as that sounds, and so subsequently I don't give a lot of concerts. But when I do, and the nice thing about that: in April, we did do a concert of Redux Orchestra, and I had my 19 musicians, and we played in Berlin, and a big crowd came because we're not doing a lot of shows now.

In a way it's very conventional in the sense that there's a score, there are parts, it's not improvised. A lot of people think it's improvised; it's not at all. It's actually extremely written-out…in fact, every measure in some way is different…And the electronics is a live electronic part that I created in almost an old-fashioned, a kind of Stockhausen…it's a part that I worked on together with Max Loderbauer, who also does always my electronic stuff. And it's not even in the score…

What are some of the sound sources or types of sounds that the electronics comprise?

All live input.

Oh, so it's all processing?

Yeah. So in fact it's a very complex part, in the sense that he has a mixer, that he's sending himself the parts that he needs to generate the things that we now, having done the piece a few times, know that we like. So it's fixed in that way, but it's an open part, so that if someone else did it, they would probably find their own... It's a sound, it's something that I think you feel sometimes more than hear…I think live it comes out more…He's using Max/MSP but he's also using his own kind of synth analog Doepfer module.

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…In Berlin it seemed much easier to meet totally different people and talk to them…I remember studying [in the States]; it was like, the idea of even meeting a DJ: where would I meet, and would they want to talk to me? …Berlin is I do think much more…people sort of have ways of meeting, cross-pollination. So I was just suddenly meeting all these people and it was just amazing to find out that separate let's say from their image or separate from their status, that actually you could on an afternoon sit, have coffee with them, and talk about Bartok or Stockhausen. They were amazing – someone like Ricardo [Villalobos], for instance, first and foremost, he's an amazing musician. He's a percussionist…His record collection, and I don't just mean techno stuff, everything from Mozart, Beethoven, is unbelievable, and he actually knows the stuff, so you can talk to him. And I started realizing, *wow, there's all these musicians*…and a little bit also

embarrassed, in the sense that they seem to know so much more about us – they seem to know much more about contemporary music – than I think any given musician or composer would know about, let's say, techno, dance, electronic.

…Knowing the musicians who I work with, how much it felt like there was such a love of music there, which was very exciting…Same with the rock thing: I think this idea of playing in a band, going on tour, the immediacy of being with the audience, the excitement, the energy, being with people who love to make the music – that's not always the case in the classical world.

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I'm a big fan of collaboration, and it's something I've really pursued. I've done a lot of collaborations, not because I haven't had things I could do on my own. Or people have called me up and said, "will you collaborate with me?" Although sometimes it's like that, but really because to me it's a very modern way of working, especially for those of us in the classical world, especially as a composer, it's a bit foreign…And not every collaboration does [work]. I think with this kind of thing it's very important to fail, it's important to try things without the pressure of it has be anything.

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After doing a lot of work in the club scene…to me it seemed a very logical place to go, was sort of like a next step to go into the world of contemporary art, because besides the club I would almost say, for a musician, the club is a very free space but it also has certain demands. The gallery or the museum is maybe the most free space, if you find a place for yourself there. It's very open, because there's no – it doesn't have to be a concert, the audience doesn't have to be sitting there, the orchestra sitting there, and it

doesn't have to be anything. It doesn't even have to be, in that sense, music. It could be anything you want it to be because now you're in the context of contemporary art, and as we know…the world of modern contemporary art is very, very broad.

Paul Frick

Personal interview, Berlin
April 16, 2013

Paul Frick (b. 1979, Berlin) played keyboard in many bands and studied classical composition and piano in college and graduate school. He bought his first computer at age 20 so he could sample his favorite hip hop records. In 2008, Frick formed Brandt Brauer Frick with Jan Brauer and Daniel Brandt; the three perform analog EDM sets and have formed the Brandt Brauer Frick Ensemble, an 11-piece group of strings, brass, and percussion. Frick orchestrates their tracks for the ensemble, which has performed Brandt Brauer Frick's unique brand of instrumental-EDM in clubs and concert halls. I interviewed Frick at Brandt Brauer Frick's studio in the neighborhood of Neukölln in Berlin. The following constitutes an edited version of our conversation. Bolded statements are my questions, followed by Frick's answers.

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What inspired you to expand into this 10-person ensemble out of your first album?

Actually the idea was already there really early because we were thinking, *ok, we want to start in clubs*, because that's where we were coming from and that's where we had a few contacts to get some gigs, maybe, so we needed a club set, wanted it quickly, so we worked with groove box and keyboard and drum pads. But while doing that we always thought *how could we do it really, really live, much more live*, and we realized, *ok, we need more people because there are so many elements in the music*. And then we made lists, what instruments…*oh, damn, it's 16 people, maybe a bit too much*. And 10 is already really a bit crazy; economically it's really a bit silly of us to do. It was just the idea of how would it be and how would it work to do it without anything

sequenced…And then about two years after the idea we first tried it. And also because then we were just newly signed to !K7 [Records] and they were really into the idea and loaned us some money to do a rehearsal.

I've found that classical players sometimes have trouble with really precise machine rhythms and stuff. Has it been ok with the different types of players?

Yeah, totally. Of course some really had to learn it, to learn to play, how you call it, in the sixteenth grid, and still sometimes we have concerts that are shaky. We haven't played for a while; everybody has to learn it again. It's just a huge concentration.

How did you go about choosing the actual instruments that would be part of the ensemble?

Why this instrumentation? We wanted some brass, but we thought, ok, we just want the rather deep brass that can actually do all these frequencies that are really pleasant when you hear techno. And also, some instruments just, for example, I wouldn't see a flute in this. I like flute, but it has such a strong connotation. And somehow, it wouldn't have been abstract enough; it could have sounded a bit too folkloristic. Same with clarinet; clarinet would sound really jazzy and saxophone was excluded, of course.

I met with Zoé Cartier, and she told me a little bit about the live thing…There's a click track for the whole set. You're putting together, say, eight songs; do you compose everything, the transitions between the songs?

No, usually there's no transitions. Or if we make transitions then they're improvised. And sometimes there's also moments when I'll turn off the click, or there also can be moments when I loop the click…and also on the click you have my voice often saying, “one, two, three, four, B!” That makes it easier for everybody. And sometimes I would loop a click, and when I take the loop off, the next bar would go, “one, two, three, four,” and then everybody would know the next part. So sometimes it can be flexible, but

not so often actually. I would like the ensemble to be even more flexible, but it's hard to make it real because also we constantly have other people playing. We barely have always the same musicians; we have already four different cello players, four different violin players and so on.

Appendix A: Interviews Conducted

Bates, Mason. Personal interview. 24 Sept. 2011.

Bates, Mason. "Re: Additional questions as I finish my dissertation." Message to the author. 19 Sept. 2013. E-mail.

Cartier**,** Zoé. Personal interview. 12 Feb. 2013.

Dacey**,** Sarah and Kerry Andrew. Personal interview. 9 July 2011.

Dautermann**,** Jennifer**.** Personal interview. 7 June 2013.

Frick, Paul. Personal interview. 16 April 2013.

Lannoy, Richard. Personal interview. 8 July 2011.

Lannoy, Richard. "Re: Additional questions for you about your work with Nonclassical and Subvision for my dissertation." Message to the author. 29 Sept. 2013. E-mail.

Loderbauer, Max**.** Personal interview. 21 March 2013.

Mackay, Sam**.** Personal interview. 8 July 2011.

Mesenburg, Felix. Personal interview. 8 March 2013.

Meyers, Ari Benjamin. Personal interview. 10 Oct. 2011.

Meyers, Ari Benjamin. "Re: Additional questions for you as I finish my dissertation." Message to the author. 23 Sept. 2013. E-mail.

Prokofiev, Gabriel. Personal interview. 8 July 2011.

Shwartz, Benjamin. Personal interview. 10 May 2013.

Appendix B: Recordings Consulted

Bates, Mason. *Mercury Soul*. MSR Classics, 2009. CD.

Brandt Brauer Frick. *You Make Me Real*. !K7 Records, 2010. CD.

Brandt Brauer Frick Ensemble. *Mr. Machine*. !K7 Records, 2011. CD.

Burgess, Joby. *Import/Export: Suite for Global Junk*. Nonclassical Records. 2010. CD.

Cybotron. *Alleys Of Your Mind*. Deep Space Records, 1981. Vinyl recording.

Frick, Paul. *Do Something EP*. Kalk Pets. 2007. Vinyl recording.

Frick, Paul. *Knock on Wood EP*. Kalk Pets. 2008. Vinyl recording.

Juice Vocal Ensemble. *Songspin*. Nonclassical Records. 2011. CD.

Meyers, Ari Benjamin. *Symphony X*. Perf. Redux Orchestra. Potomak, 2009. CD.

Pantha du Prince and the Bell Laboratory. *Elements of Light*. Rough Trade. 2012. CD.

Redux Orchestra and Einstuerzende Neubauten. *Redux Orchestra versus Einstuerzende Neubauten*. Potomak, 2006. CD.

Tristano, Francesco. *bachCage*. Deutsche Grammophon. 2011. CD.

Appendix C: Relevant Live Performances Attended

Redux Orchestra. *Club Redux 2: Redux Orchestra performs Steve Reich*. Watergate, Berlin. March 2005.

Nonclassical. Le Poisson Rouge, New York. July 21, 2010.

Nonclassical. Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. July 7, 2011.

Nonclassical. Chalet, Berlin. November 28, 2012.

Brandt Brauer Frick Ensemble. Volksbühne, Berlin. December 23, 2012.

Pantha du Prince and the Bell Laboratory. Hubbell am Ufer, Berlin. January 30, 2013.

Kiezoper. Stattbad, Berlin. February 23, 2013.

Ari Benjamin Meyers - *Songbook* (opening). Galerie Esther Schipper, Berlin. March 15, 2013.

Yellow Lounge. Gretchen, Berlin. May 6, 2013.

Mercury Soul. Metro, Chicago. May 10, 2013.

Winston-Salem Symphony. Stevens Center, Winston-Salem, NC. May 14, 2013. (performance of Mason Bates' *Liquid Interface*)

Francesco Tristano. Berlin Atonal (festival), Kraftwerk, Berlin. July 28, 2013.

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Biography

Alex H. Kotch is a composer, producer, performer on laptop, clarinet and saxophone, and writer. An active performer of original electronic dance music and instrumental-EDM, he has written acoustic and electroacoustic chamber music for the concert hall, dance, and theater. From 2012-2013, he lived in Berlin, Germany, with funding from a German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Research Grant and a Duke University International Research Travel Fellowship, researching and writing Chapter 2 of this dissertation.